

Area Friends Remember When:

collected & edited by

James E Mennell



A Collection of
Nostalgic Memories
of Times Gone By



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FOREWORD

Most people think of history as consisting of written records like newspapers, photographs and official documents. Only recently have historians come to realize that an important record of the past lies in the memories of people who have experienced history themselves in their own lives. Their spoken memories can be the best historical record a community has with which to remember its past. This book is a collection of a series of interviews with people from the Mercer, Grove City, and Slippery Rock area. They were asked to recollect how they worked and played when they were growing up. This book is a result of their answers.

I would like to thank Mrs. Gail Dunkerley Voltz for her help in compiling this book. Her encouragement, advice and knowledge of this community were invaluable.

I would also like to acknowledge the help of the following people in assembling this book: Mr. Mark Brown, President and Mrs. Viola Lawry, Secretary of the Mercer County Historical Society; Mrs. Jan Hardisky of College View Towers; and Mr. Bruce Russell of Media Services at Slippery Rock University. A special thanks to the Mercer County Historical Society, and Mr. Walter Frankenburg of Grove City, for allowing me to reproduce photographs that are used in this book. Thanks to Lesa Reed, for her help in designing the cover on this book.

Dr. James E. Mennell
Slippery Rock University

LEONA BISHOP - 1905

I was born in the coal mining town of Pardoe in 1905. Both my parents were born in Pardoe too. My father was the postmaster and storekeeper at the big company store at Pardoe. The company store was a large building; we lived upstairs above the store. The store was owned by the coal mine so that miners could get credit for food between paydays, and it gave the miners a place to shop right near the mine and the company houses they lived in. Prices were just about the same as in other stores. After the mine closed about 1914 it took my mother almost a day to go to the store and buy groceries elsewhere. Of course the company wouldn't allow any other stores to open by the mine except for a butcher shop. The company store was a general store and you could buy almost anything you would ordinarily need. We never had any trouble at the store. It was a small community and the miners were wonderful people. There were a few immigrants but mostly the miners were people from the area. My father had to pass a test to become postmaster. Everybody had his own mailing address and mailbox at the store and he sorted the mail and put it into the appropriate box. My father closed the store about 8 P.M. so that he could clean it up. All the supplies came in by railroad, I think from Pittsburgh.

Number 2 and Number 5 mines were the really big mines around here, but they didn't have the quality of coal that the Pardoe mine had. There was no labor union among the miners and I don't remember them wanting one; that was a long time ago. Workers were paid by the amount of coal they mined. The miners would fill up small railroad cars. When they finished they put their initials and number on the car and the little "dinky" engine would bring the cars up to the surface and then the coal would be weighed and the amount of coal in each car would be credited to the miner whose car it was.

There was a shop in town that served the miners' work needs. It sold carbide for their lamps and dynamite. The company paid for the dynamite and the miners would sign for as much as they needed at the shop. The miners paid for their own carbide.

The miners took care of their people. My grandma Brunton had lost her husband and she got by by washing and ironing for the miners. The miners helped her out by knocking coal off their cars before they were weighed for Grandma Brunton to pick up to heat her house with. That was their way of helping her out. There was a water pump by the meat market and my mother used to carry water up to her to fill her boilers and tubs for washing the miner's clothes. Mrs. Minozzi gave her bread too. The Minozzi's had 13 children and Mrs. Minozzi made some money by baking bread. She had a very big brick and stone oven in her yard with long-handled wooden paddles to take the bread out with. The loaves cost 13 cents, which was not cheap but everyone wanted fresh baked bread.

Dr. Barnes, the local doctor, usually charged \$2 a call, but he would take only \$1 if that was all you could afford. He also would dispense medicine

and adjusted the cost of that too. I think he got more from the farmers because they were better off. Nobody took advantage of him that I know of. Nobody took advantage of anyone in Pardoe; we were a close knit community. Dr. Barnes was a good doctor too, but I don't think he ever was able to buy a car.

The Pardoe school was a two story building with the primary grades downstairs and fifth through eighth grades upstairs; Nellie Wright taught downstairs and "Red" Barnes was upstairs; later on they got married. He rode a horse to school and she drove a buggy. There were plenty of students two and three to a seat. There were no problem kids; they would get a whipping at home if they got out of hand at school. Of course there were pranks like dipping a girls' long hair in an inkwell. The school was heated with a big coal/wood burner. It was warm enough since we wore long underwear and could put our boots on if our feet got cold. Eighth grade boys carried in the wood and coal and took out the ashes. I remember my school days as wonderful. If you were absent from school the teacher would tell Dr. Barnes and he would stop by to see you.

When the mine played out in about 1914 we moved to a farm and my father got a job at the Bessemer Gas Engine Plant. He would walk $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles to catch the 6 A.M. train from Mercer. I think the train ride cost about 15¢.

My baby brother died in 1909 when he was 14 days old. There was no point in taking him to the hospital in Grove City. He had yellow jaundice and Dr. Barnes put him in a clothes basket on the oven door and my mother took care of him for the 14 days. Dr. Barnes told my parents from the beginning that he wouldn't live. They took the news calmly; it was not so rare to lose a baby in those days. Dad went over to Springfield cemetery and dug the 3 foot grave; in those days you could do it yourself. Dad bought a little wooden coffin from Miller's in Mercer the undertaker. They have since gotten out of that business and now sell furniture only. Then they wrapped the baby's body in a sheet. The whole thing cost about \$25. The baby died during the night and they left for Mercer about 9 A.M. Later that day Reverend Brown went to the cemetery with my parents and me and said a few words over the coffin. Dad stayed behind and filled in the grave and walked home to Pardoe. Nobody else came to the funeral because it was just impractical; Springfield cemetery was just too far to expect the people of Pardoe to go on a workday. Many friends had visited while the baby was alive with suggestions and comfort. There was just no wake for babies.

It was different for adults. When my grandma and grandpa died they were displayed in our home for three days. Miller's of Mercer came and got their bodies in his black hearse and took them to Mercer to embalm them and brought them back. They were displayed in our parlor because their own home was nine miles away and many people could not have gone that far in those days before automobiles. They travelled in buggies called "tracky wagons"; these looked just like the buggies that the Amish use today except they didn't have roofs on them. People would come in for three days to pay their respects, but it was just your own people who would go to the cemetery. There was no special food served and people would bring food with them to help out. An adult funeral cost about \$200 then. You paid for the grave, the embalming, the funeral clothes, and the hearse to take the coffin to the cemetery.

Grandfather Harrison had been a Lt. Colonel in the Civil War and Mr. Miller put on all his medals and insignia on the clothes. The coffins varied in price but since the government paid for it and the monument stone because Grandfather was a veteran we got a good one.

The only Civil War story I heard from Grandfather was about a plantation in the South. It was very beautiful and when they entered it they found that all its people were dead. The soldiers buried them. America was proud of its Civil War veterans and took good care of them. Grandfather received \$88 a month until he died, and then Grandmother received the same \$88 a month until she died. My husband got less than that after World War I.

LOUISE BLACK

My maiden name was Brown and my ancestors came from Browntown the way my husband's came from Blacktown. Browntown was three or four miles from Grove City down the Slippery Rock road. You turn east at Walker's Corners where there is now a row of mobile homes today and go as far as the railroad tracks and then turn south again for a mile or so on a little dirt road. My father was born not far from the old school that was there. Newton Ebenezer Brown was my great-grandfather and the outstanding member of our clan and probably the founder of Browntown. He was a Presbyterian pastor. His church for 20 years from 1866 to 1886 was the Wolf Creek Presbyterian Church on the road from Slippery Rock towards New Castle near where the Patterson furniture store is today. Actually he was pastor of that church in the church building before the present one was built.

My grandfather farmed at Browntown but my father left for Pittsburgh to escape an unpleasant stepmother in his early teen years to work on a dairy farm. He met and married my mother in Pittsburgh. He delivered milk and would leave so early for work about 1:30 A.M. that he would always say prayers with us when we went to bed. We always closed our prayers for him with the words, "Watch out for rabbits, posts, cops, cars, and school children." I still say that to my own kids when I tuck them in.

We lived near Sewickley on a farm. My mother's father had divided his farm, among his five children and we lived on our part of the farm. That was a well-to-do area and we had hunt club privileges because we gave hunting privileges across our land to the local fox hunting club. So on Saturdays we often saw the horses and the riders in their bright red jackets riding across country with their dogs and their bugles blowing when they were on the trail of a fox. That is quite a fond memory and when I am going to the airport I watch for the fox hunters. It was a special occasion when the hunt club would have a big dinner for all the people whose land they crossed. It was the most elegant thing in my childhood. It seemed like hours but the meal was worth it.

When I was 12 we moved back to Grove City; it was in 1944 during World War II. My father became the manager of the Odd Fellow's farm. We got to live there in the house provided; it was a double house. The farm buildings are gone now. They were directly north of the Odd Fellows building, and very near where the water tower is. The lane is still there. But within a year my father had rented a farm in the Browntown area.

The school at Browntown had closed by that time and my sisters went to school in North Liberty. There was no bus but Mr. Howard Brenneman picked them up in his car every day. I went to the Grove City schools even though I had to pay them tuition because my father was afraid that I wouldn't pass the high school entrance test if I went to a rural school. I was in the eighth grade so it would only be one year and there would have been a much bigger adjustment needed from the Pittsburgh schools to a rural school. And I had missed a lot of school because my mother had been ill and I had had to take care of my youngest sister. I believe the tuition cost my dad \$10 a month.

I didn't have to worry about amusing myself when I was young. There was much to do on the farm and there were ample baby sitting opportunities. I helped out my parents by working as a live-in babysitter for Dr. Furlong in Grove City while I was in High School.

To make extra money mother would bake pies and bread to sell at the farmer's market in Grove City. If memory serves me it was located in the same spot where it is today. And they sold about the same products then and now; fresh produce and fresh baked bread. Fresh bread was a big seller in mother's time and she usually arrived at the farmer's market having sold through pre-orders all the bread she could bake. She would bake no less than a dozen loaves and she went into the market twice a week. There were bakeries in town but people seemed to want bread right out of the oven. Because she wanted the bread to be so fresh, mother would get up before 6 A.M. so that she could get to the market before noon. She sold the bread for 20 to 25¢ a loaf when bread was selling in the stores for 15¢ a loaf. Mother's bread sold well in spite of the booming sales of the Ideal Bakery. The Ideal was located about where the Riverside supermarket is today and they had between 15 and 20 delivery trucks selling to homes in the entire area. Mother also sold cream pies. They were popular; they sold for about 30¢. We also sold eggs and vegetables in season; rhubarb was a big seller. Mother sold all year round; I can remember shivering in the truck with the cold. I thought it was a dreadful way to make a living, especially the embarrassment, to my young eyes, that went with selling out of a truck. But mother really enjoyed it and she kept an oat meal box on the top of the china cupboard where she kept her money. I didn't have to go with her to town very often; she enjoyed doing it herself.

We went shopping in Grove City every Friday night. But I remember the visiting more than I do the buying. It was not so much the farmers talking to the city people as it was the farmers talking to farmers. In Pittsburgh we shopped at a farmer's market on the North side. Mother would go off to do her shopping and father would take us kids for a treat and babysit us. When we got to Grove City we kids were big enough to fend for ourselves and daddy would usually stay in the car while mother visited on the sidewalks with other farm ladies. Farm families tended to congregate around the Murphy's five and ten. People still seem to congregate around Murphy's more than anywhere else on Broad street. Maybe it is because it is the longest store and there is less chance of blocking people entering or leaving the store.

People certainly congregated around the movie theater on "bank night" when a lucky ticket holder would win \$25 in cash. You held onto your entrance ticket which had a number on it. Then after the movie was over the manager would raise the lights and come up onto the stage to hold the drawing. It was very popular.

One store that sticks in my mind was Langdon's in Mercer. I always thought then that it was the quaintest store I had ever been in; it seemed to belong to an earlier age. The clerks and the merchandise always seemed at least a hundred years old and the store in general looked very old. You could see that Langdon's kept adding new lines of merchandise, but they never threw the old merchandise out. It was almost like a museum. I'm sure some of the merchandise on the shelves had to be decades old. What kind of lighting did they have? I'm not sure they had any, it was always so dark in there. The back of the store was even more dismal than the front. It was a double sized store with hardware and men's things on one side and dry goods and women's things on the other. I remember a white-haired old lady who waited on me, maybe she was Mrs. Langdon. They never seemed to care whether you bought anything or not; they didn't push you into purchases and would wait for you to come to them. There were glass display cases all along the east side of the store. They held dusty cut glass and jewelry. Langdon's seem to be treasuring that merchandise, as though they didn't want you to touch it, that it was being protected. And there was a lot of dust; it didn't seem like a very well cared for store. At Langdon's you could also buy garments of all sizes from babies right up to adults. And at the back of the store you could buy any kind of fabric by the yard. Just the nicest variety of fabrics. There was nothing better than Langdon's for fabric any closer than Sharon. For fabrics I miss Langdon's; there is nothing like it today.

The Humes hotel in Mercer was a striking building; it was big and was always painted white and there were always people sitting out on the porch along the front. The Penn-Grove hotel in Grove City was also a big and important hotel. The Bessemer entertained all its people there and, I think, was responsible for having it built. I remember when a hotel was built in Hallville and was called the Grove City hotel. A lot of people were upset at that; I guess the Traveler's hotel was for travelling salesmen and the Penn-Grove was for the Bessemer people and the rest of the town. Some people thought that two hotels in town were enough. The Penn-Grove flooded whenever Wolf Creek rose very high. They could have called the Penn-Grove the Wolf Creek hotel, because Wolf Creek was in it so often.

My most vivid memory of World War II concerned the farm we rented at Browntown, Meadowview Farm. The farm was owned by a Pittsburgher with a foreign-sounding name. And there were all sorts of rumors circulating around the Grove City area that he hid saboteurs up in the two barns on Meadowview farm. My husband says that had he known at the time that I came from Meadowview Farm he would not have had anything to do with me, such was the antagonism directed toward that farm. By the main barn there were two big silos and everybody knew that the owner had to have radios he was operating from the silos. Us Browns minded our own business and ran the farm. After the war the rumors were all forgotten.

JIM BLACK - 1927

I was born in 1927 on a farm on Black's Run [named after my grandfather] which is now part of the George Junior Republic. There are a number of streams in this area named Black's Run and I think the reason for this is that they all originate in the Blacktown area.

Grandfather Black was an amazingly self-sufficient man. He dammed up Black's Run and installed a water-powered vertical saw mill. He sawed all his own lumber and probably that of other farmers as well. He also made a blacksmith shop which I remember as a boy. He equipped the shop with a line shaft from the water wheel which when attached to pulleys and belts could power grinderwheels, a bellows, and other power tools. He may have used steam power later on, I don't know. But he did all his own iron work. He made his own lathe, forging the various parts in his shop. With that lathe he turned all the porch pillars in the farm house. Being a farmer and a blacksmith, it is amazing to me that he chose as his hobby the making of violins. I remember seeing one of them when I was a boy and it was beautiful, but I don't know what became of it.

My father became a machinist at Cooper-Bessemer, but things became so slow in 1932 that he decided to go back to farming and he returned to his father's farm. When we moved to the farm from Grove City my father did not want me to attend the local one-room school, the Cranberry school on Cranberry Road; he wanted me to attend the Grove City schools to get a good education. Was he right? Well it probably depended on the quality of the individual teacher. And then the teacher in a one-room school used the seventh and eighth grade students to tutor the younger students and this was a good way for the older ones to learn too. But father wanted me in the Grove City schools. I attended the Cranberry school for seventh and eighth grades, so I got a chance to compare the two types of schools. Mrs. Edna Baker was my teacher at Cranberry school. I think I got a better education at Cranberry than I did in the city school. There were fewer students in my grade, 4 or 5 of them, and what attention we did get it was easier for the teacher to know where we were in our capabilities and drive. And Mrs. Baker was a fine teacher. Discipline in the one-room school was more personal. We respected Mrs. Baker and felt bad when we let her down by bad behavior. In a school system where there is less personal contact between student and teacher, that sense of letting the teacher down with bad behavior would be lost. I liked the one-room school because it was more like family. We took turns walking down to a neighboring farm house to fill our water bucket. We had a water crock at the back of the room with a spigot.

Sometimes the older kids would try to get the younger ones in trouble. I remember one time when "Pepper" Riddle, a first grader, received a hatchet for Christmas. He started telling us all the things he could do with that hatchet so we goaded him into going into the girls' privvy and chopping out the "stink pipe" [the vent pipe]. He began to do it and Mrs. Baker heard

the noise and came out and stopped him. Another time was when we used to go into the woods nearby to play. We would bend sapplings down until the little kids could reach their tops, have them grab hold, and then swing them back and forth; they got some wild rides until Mrs. Baker heard about it and then we were in trouble.

All the farm boys trapped animals for their pelts; you could get \$4-5 for a good muskrat pelt and that was a lot of money in those days. One time one of us caught a skunk. We got the bright idea of throwing the dead skunk under the school building. When Mrs. Baker got to school the next day the whole building stunk. She was waiting for us when we arrived and she didn't have too much trouble detecting who had done it because we didn't smell to good. After we cleaned ourselves up, I think we got some extra duties from our little experience.

There was a lot of trapping around here. We went for muskrat mostly because it was the best paying and the most common fur-bearing animal. There were a few red fox and only rarely a mink. One year my brother and I trapped close to a hundred muskrat and that produced a tidy sum of money. Prices for pelts had been low in the 1930's so trapping was down. But as women began to work in the war plants they wanted fur coats and so the price went up to \$4-5, and since trapping had been down there were plenty of muskrat in this area. Prices rose to as high as \$40 a pelt.

As we look back on farm life in the depression it might be said that farm families were poor, but we didn't know it. Dad had a dairy farm with about 12 milking cows. He would haul the milk to the old creamery across from the Cooper-Bessemer, which was owned by Borden's dairy, in his car. It was a 1930 Plymouth. He would take the back seat out, put in a piece of canvass to protect the upholstery, and load the milk cans in the back. We earned \$25 a month for the milk and we bought all we needed with that money since we grew most of our food. We had chickens, eggs, and we would butcher a steer and mother would can it. We would either salt or smoke pork.

We had a smoke house and dad gave me the job of tending the smoke fire. The fire was in a barrel on its side outside the smoke house with a pipe for the smoke leading into the little house. At a steady rate you put green hickory wood on top of the fire. The trick was not to make the fire too hot or not hot enough; dad warned me about this and went to do some farm chores. I got impatient and the smoke house roof caught fire. I put it out with snow and thought I had avoided trouble with dad. But when dad returned and went into the smoke house there was a big pile of grease on the floor and all the meat was cooked instead of being smoked; I had got it way too hot.

We didn't go into town much when I was little. By the end of the day we were usually too tired to want to do anything but sit out on the porch. When we got a little bigger we would ride our bikes to get around, and we would ride them for miles. I remember after a day's work riding over to Stewart McCandless's farm, about five miles away, and then we would ride to Mercer together on our bikes.

I remember the scrap drives of World War II, how all the kids scoured the area for anything that they could contribute to the scrap drives.

In one way it was sad; in the 1950's when I got interested in antique cars I heard from many people that the antique cars they had had in their barns and garages which had been contributed to the wartime scrap drives. It seems a pity now because they couldn't have made that big a difference in the small amount of scrap collected. The Civil War cannon on the Mercer Diamond were also lost when the government asked for all the Civil War cannons across the country. Were they needed that much to lose such price-less monuments and momentos?

Mercer in those days was a very quiet town, not much going on except for the big court trials. We had some girl friends in Mercer and they kept telling us about the Wilson murder trial [for the murders on the Wilson farm, see Memories of Mercer: 1920-1950 by James Mennell]. In those days people didn't mention sex either in the newspapers or in polite conversation, so these girls would excitedly tell us all the dirt that they had heard come out in the courtroom testimony.

When I went to high school during World War II they had a program in which students in the shop classes made scale models of airplanes for use in helping military personnel learn to identify friendly and enemy planes. They were made exactly to scale from planes and all were painted black. Because I liked airplanes and making these model planes I decided to join the Civil Air Patrol cadets. We had uniforms and meetings like the Boy Scouts, but we assisted the Civil Air Patrol in its duties. They would train us to march and carry a rifle and things like that. One time when a P-51 fighter plane had engine trouble it crashed up near Route 8 near Franklin. The government didn't want anyone picking up the wreck so us cadets were given the task of guarding the wreckage until it could be carted off. We were given .45 Cal. pistols to use in guarding the wreck.

We didn't have electricity on our farm until about 1940, and we didn't have a telephone. We got a Delco 30 volt lighting system in 1940. It had a gasoline generator which charged a big bank of glass batteries 18 to 20. Our first radio was battery-powered and was so old that it had a big cornucopia-shaped bell speaker. I remember that it had a blue light that glowed if the power was turned on. I think we could only get a couple of stations: the Grove City College station, WSAJ, and KDKA. I don't remember listening to the Butler and New Castle stations, but we didn't listen a whole bunch because the batteries were expensive. Then my uncle who owned a new radio station in Pittsburgh, came out and converted our battery radio to run off our Delco 30 volt system. With that change we could listen to the radio much more than before. The Delco generator had a tank that held a gallon of gasoline and when the gallon was all used up the batteries would be fully charged. Since we had no electric motors on the place to draw off the electric power, only the lights and radio, we could now listen to the radio regularly. We listened to Ed Shauncy on KDKA every morning. I remember when Ed's first child was born, he was so excited that morning. I have never forgotten it. After school I liked the Tom Mix program and in the evening Fibber McGee and Mollie, Inner Sanctum, and I Love a Mystery. My special favorite was I love a Mystery. It was so good that it would be popular today if they put it on again. We listened to all the network shows, Bob Hope, Gang Busters, Mr. Keane: Tracer of Lost Persons, and Easy Aces.

I remember one time my mother read an article to us, it must have been about 1940, which described the possibility of television. I remember her saying, "How wonderful it would be if a moving picture could come right into our living room! It will only cost \$500." Later when television came out after the war I recalled my mother's wish. I don't remember the airline planes that occasionally landed at Tait Field in Mercer. The only time I remember going to the air field to see a plane was when Oakley Kelly flew in in 1939 or 1940, Kelly had earlier been run out of Grove City for causing so much trouble; he was considered a hell-raiser locally. Actually he was just the kind of daredevil who made a good fighter pilot. He had flown the early air-mail routes in the days when it took much courage to do and had become well known for his flying accomplishments by 1940. He was also notorious for using his plane to "buzz" people on the ground. Anyway, one time Oakley Kelly flew into Tait Field to visit his mother in Grove City. I heard that he had come home in his fighter plane so I went out to Tait Field to see it. Actually I heard about Kelly being home from my brother-in-law who lived near Tait Field. When a fast, noisy plane "buzzed" the field a few times he said, "Oh, that must be Oakley Kelly. Let's go up and see his airplane." So we raced down the back roads to the field. Kelly had already left but his plane was there. It was a P-26 and impressed us very much. It was one of the first monoplane fighters in the Army Air Force. It had a fixed undercarriage and fabric-covered fuselage. Today the P-26 is a museum piece and I have seen one in the Air Force museum at Wright-Patterson Field.

Automobile prices have certainly gone up since I was a boy. I remember when I was a little boy about 1938 we had a young hired man who worked around for the various farmers for his room and board and occasionally for a little money once in a while; he didn't have a home of his own. One day he came driving up our lane in a Model T Ford pickup truck. It was about 20 years old but it was all shined up and looked very good and had five extra tires in the back. He had bought it from John Rogers, who lived almost across the road from where Kimes garage is now, for \$5!

One of the exciting things for me when I was young was the air mail pickup. Many towns were too small to rate a regular air passenger service which handled air mail, so they devised a system in which an airplane would fly between two poles from which was suspended a line that the plane could snag with a hook. Attached to the line was an air mail pouch containing outgoing airmail for Grove City. At the same time he came over the pilot dropped a pouch with incoming air mail for Grove City. A small airline started such an air mail pickup route which included Grove City and Mercer beginning in about 1940. The pickup was not at the airport but back of the community park among the mine hills, about $\frac{1}{4}$ mile from where the new armory building is today. There were two metal poles each about 40 feet high. The plane they used was a Stinson Reliant, a four-place plane with a powerful engine and which was a very stable aircraft; it could fly very slowly so it was ideal for this operation. Rain or shine, sleet or hail, that Reliant would come in. I believe the system lasted for about ten years. They moved the location for the pickup to the other side of Grove City for some reason. The new location was where the roller rink across from the cemetery is now. I knew a World War II pilot who was offered the job and who flew the route to look it over. He said that it would be a fine job in good weather, but they flew in all weather, rain or shine. The more he thought about it the more dangerous he realized that it was, so he decided against it.

JAMES BYERS

I was born in 1918 in Mercer. My father was a plumber and so am I. Mercer gets her water from Otter creek. I remember the old water tank before we got the two new ones. It was much smaller. Any time they had a fire they would run out of water and have to start the pump going to pump more water into the tank.

We've had some spectacular fires here. The old silk mill made a big fire when it burned and it was located about half way down the hill on East Market street about across the street from the apartments today. I remember when the opera house burned down in the 1920's because my father had his plumbing shop in the same block. Wike's livery stable, just behind Miller's furniture store, was a big fire. At one time the Uptown fire company was located where the public parking lot is today behind the Diamond. But then they went broke and the East End company gobbled them up. We've got enough fire equipment now to handle a fire. Another bad fire was in a livery stable near Vincent's garage behind the North Diamond; many horses perished in that one.

The funniest fire occurred at the laundry of Manny Wallace. He was living in the little brick building behind the laundry. He was upstairs and I can still hear his voice, he had a big voice that you could hear all over town. He had gotten all excited when he discovered the fire and began to yell out the window, "Help! Help! when all he had to do was to walk down the stairs and out of the building; the fire wasn't anywhere near him. Finally someone had to go in the door and yell up to him to get away from the window and stop yelling.

The kids in town always had fun on the big East Market street hill. Watt Miller used to have a dray that met the train and hauled the dry goods up to the Diamond. We would hook a rope around his load and get a ride up the hill with his horses pulling our sleds. When he discovered us and turned his whip on us we would simply drop our ropes and we would slide backwards out of danger.

We used to go ice skating on Burns' pond just about where the Plantation Park is today. Sometimes there would be as many as a hundred people skating there. And old Jimmy Wright had a pond we skated on. It was about where the convalescent home is now; where you come to a pond today, well Jimmy's pond was just beyond that. His brick home is still there but you can barely see it now; that place was a show place with its pine trees pruned so nice. Then there was Harris' pond, I skated on that too. People would clean off the ice and build a nice warm fire and they would have a building to get warm in.

I learned to swim in Brandy Springs creek. We used to dam it up so that it was deep enough. The kids did the damming; we would find big stones to do it with. We also dammed up Greenville run to swim in.

That was before Buckham dammed Otter creek permanently and made it into the town swimming pool. The whole town joined together in the 1930's to put in electric lights there.

One store in town that never seemed to change was Huston's dry goods store where the Murphy's is now. They had a clerk sitting high up on a balcony and you would put your purchase and the money in a basket that travelled on a trolley. The clerk would pull it up and ring up the sale. Huston's was the biggest store in town. When it burned down Mercer suffered its only fire-fighting death. It was right after World War I and a volunteer fire fighter entered the smoke-filled building with a World War I gas mask on to protect himself. It didn't work against smoke fumes and he collapsed inside Huston's. George Boyd, who went in and dragged him out, was awarded the Carnegie medal for it.

The main store in town where people congregated was Montgomery's around the potbellied stove. You would go in there and see about eight guys sitting in old chairs around that stove telling lies. It was supposed to be a pharmacy but you could buy groceries in bulk there too. They had molasses in barrels, cider and vinegar in barrels, and big containers of tea. You would take your own cider or vinegar jug and they would fill it. It was an old rough-and-ready store and they didn't seem to care if they sold anything or not, but they made lots of money. In the early days of automobiles they were about the only place where you could get automobile supplies. They had a gasoline pump too, as did the Corner Drug Store. And both of them were supposed to be drug stores.

Grocers often displayed their goods in front of their stores to tempt people to buy them. Kenny Haddon had a bushel basket of English walnuts in front of his store one time. But he forgot that the court house park was full of squirrels; they even had boxes to encourage squirrels to nest there. Well those squirrels discovered that bushel basket and would run back and forth to the park. Finally Kenny caught on to where all his walnuts were disappearing to. The squirrels are gone now from the court house park; the cars got them.

My father was born in Mercer in 1870. He served in the Spanish-American War and loved to lead the Memorial Day parade to the cemetery with all the other old veterans. On Memorial Day evening the Social Circle would hold a dance and my dad loved to lead the "Paul Jones." It was a kind of dance with a female partner and my dad would call out, "All change!" Then all the women would go around in a circle until the music stopped. Then you always danced with whoever was beside you. He always got the good-looking women and I got stuck with the old ladies.

At one time there was an iron foundry in Mercer down where the Reznor Manufacturing is now. And there was a brewery, too; but I think the brand was private. There was a brewer's spring down there and also down by the fair grounds. Another place down by the Reznor made wooden tubs. My dad told me about that. In spite of the brewery there was no illegal whiskey made around here during Prohibition. There was a woman on the Clarksville road who sold it but I don't think she made it too.

I got out of high school in 1931 and you couldn't buy a regular job.

I scrubbed floors, I cleaned wallpaper, I beat rugs, I washed windows, I mowed lawns, almost anything to make money; a quarter was big money in those days. You could walk up to the park benches in the court house park and find all sorts of good mechanics, brick layers, carpenters, and plumbers; and there they were sitting, no one to hire them.

A lot of people here cursed the New Deal during the Depression, but it did a lot of good. I couldn't get a job so I went to the Civilian Conservation Corps [the CCC] camp for a year. Looking back it wasn't a bad idea; it kept young guys from going into crime because it gave them something to do. If they hadn't done something there would have been trouble. The only thing that politics came into it and a lot of people said that it was all wrong; but it was necessary. I will admit that they spent a lot of money in this town that went right down the drain. They tried to build a football field out of a hill side down by the fair grounds and it was just a joke. We had only one truck and it was all hand labor; it took 15 guys a day using shovels to load the thing. One good project they had in town was to trim down the curb in front of Murphy's. Before that the curb would knock off your hubcaps when you brushed it. Another good project was the tree trimming; there were too many old trees with limbs hanging way out. Another good project was that they put curbing all around town where there hadn't been any before. Of course they used inferior materials too, and had to do it all over again later on. And they fixed the sidewalks. The town sidewalks were largely big slate flagstones and many of them were now crooked and heaved up. The WPA would come around and straighten them up. They did a lot of good keeping guys busy. Many people here said that it was wasteful but that all depends on how you look at it. And the men on WPA had to work harder than people say. When they were putting in paved country roads, the WPA men got stones from the farmers around here and the men had to crush it and pack it in; and they were given so many feet to do a day and they were expected to do it. They had to swing a sledge hammer all day and that is work.

I remember the Liberty movie theater in the days of the silent movies. Ern Findley, the music teacher, used to play the piano at the Liberty. Whenever they had a western and a big climax would come up she always played the same music and it about tore the piano apart. That was a riot! everyone would be whooping and hollering! I remember the old opera house showed movies, it was a nickelodeon; and we would go up to "nigger heaven", that was the name for the balcony. That was cheaper and all the kids would go up there and we had fun up there. On the first floor of the opera house there were shops. The old Western Press had its office there. Ernie Phillips had a restaurant in there too. And dad's plumbing shop was clear at the upper end of it. Just north of the opera house where the Stranahan law office is today was a Pennz Oil gas station, but before that it was a vacant lot with big cut stone slabs laid in there for a long time and I was told that they were the stones left over from the court house. Mary Filer says that she remembers when there was a barber shop on that corner. I remember when there was a community bill board there with maps of Mercer County on it to help tourists who were travelling through.

When the Liberty theater first got sound movie equipment the sound was not very good. I'll never forget when "Gone With the Wind" came to the Liberty.

Holy cow, they packed them in that night! You couldn't have gotten any more people in the place. The entrance and ticket booth to the Liberty was right where the drive-in bank is on the North Diamond. But the theater itself was behind what is now the drug store on the corner. The Hotel Humes [which had been the old Whistler house] burned down in 1916 and the theater was built on part of the resulting vacant lot. In fact the theater's stage is still there. If you go in on North Pitt street the stage is up to the right.

I remember the "cut-outs" that we used to have on cars during the 1920's. Instead of having a straight exhaust pipe from the engine to the muffler to dampen the noise of the engine, the pipe had a Y in it just below where the driver sat. When you tromped on it it opened a valve and bypassed the muffler and boy would it bark! It would blow your ears off.

The community tennis court on Butler street was right back of where the Wolf's Head has its big tanks now. Mary Filer says she remembers when the red brick Magoffin house next to the Historical Society had a tennis court in its back yard.

Sometimes commercial airliners would make emergency landings at Tait Field during the 1920's. One time that happened in a winter storm and it was bitter cold. The passengers were all brought into town to keep warm. When it was safe to take off they tried to start the engines. All they had was an old piece of canvass covering the engines to keep them warm. We did all we could to warm up the engines that day, but it was so cold you couldn't touch metal or your skin would stick to it. Then we plugged in the electric starter and turned her over. We tried and tried but no luck; it would just sputter and die. So I brought the pilots back into town to get warm. When I went back out to the field later we took the spark plugs out and it was so cold that they were iced up and that was why the plane wouldn't fly.

Flying was rough-and-ready in those days. The Army was flying the airmail in rickety planes in all weather and they lost many pilots. We spent a whole day looking for a mail plane that had gone down north of town. They took us Boy Scouts out to Clarks Mills and we walked all day without anything to eat looking for that mail plane and we didn't find it. It was later found clear over at Chagrin Falls, Ohio. Pilots in those days were like astronauts today. When an airplane came over in those days people would rush out of the house and watch it with mouths open.

I don't remember the Clyde Harding murder trial in the 1920's but I sure remember the Leroy Palmer trial for the murder of Howard Sidley in 1936. /See Mercer Memories: 1920-1950/. I was there when the jury brought the verdict in. When the Not Guilty verdict was announced the whole courtroom clapped and cheered and the judge threatened to clear the court room. It wasn't just Palmer's relatives, everybody was there. Nobody thought Palmer had done it, the evidence was all circumstantial. If that trial had been held today there would have been an easy way of proving guilt or innocence. You see Palmer had blood on his clothes when arrested. Today they can prove whether it is human blood or not. They claimed they were going to analyze the blood on Palmer's clothes but the results were never brought out at the trial.

ALBERT EATON - 1901

I was born in 1901 in Butler County in a little town called Gall which was up the Hilliard branch. I didn't go to high school because I preferred to go to work. A neighbor had a saw mill and I went to work peeling railroad ties when I was 12 years old. This was necessary when a log wasn't thick enough to flatten on all four sides; they would do it on only two sides and the bark would have to be peeled off the two untouched sides. I got a cent and a half a piece for each tie I finished and a lot of days I would make \$1.50 for eight hours work. When I was 15 I worked for a farmer for \$15 a month and room and board. We worked from about 7 A.M. til about 7 or 8 P.M., with an hour for lunch and an hour for supper.

By the time I was sixteen I went into logging and stayed with it for the rest of my life just like my father. Most of the trees we cut down had not been planted by white men; they were first cut and they were very thick in diameter. They were mostly cherry, oak, chestnut, and maple. My father had worked twelve hour days in the woods but the eight hour day was coming in and that's what I worked. It was piece work and you could make about \$2.50 a day. But my father told me that when he started logging he worked for six months without pay and finally told his boss that he needed money. His boss gave him \$5 for the six months. Later he made about \$1.50 a day. But everybody had at least a small farm and raised most of the food we ate. We kept cows, chickens, and hogs. We didn't feel poor. I had a suit and white shirt to wear to church.

For fun I played on a baseball team and went fishing. We caught chubs and suckers about a mile from our home. Harrisville was the nearest town, about four miles away and we went in every Saturday night by horse and buggy. Some of us kids would walk in because there wasn't room enough in the buggy. We bought the week's supply of groceries. Walking four miles into town was nothing. We lived four miles east of Harrisville and sometimes I would walk into Grove City, about eight or nine miles.

I played baseball for Barkeyville. One time I was up there and another team came into Barkeyville to play and the Barkeyville team didn't have enough players so they asked me if I would play. I said I would until the regular player came. When he came they didn't put him in because I had already gotten a couple of hits. They asked me to play with their team and I did.

We worked a six day week and we would arrive in Harrisville between six and seven P.M. We quit an hour early on Saturdays, at four P.M., so that we could get cleaned up for town. We didn't wear special clothes to go to town, just clean clothes. We came to town as much to see the people as to shop. Shopping took about an hour and then we socialized around the store. There were three groceries in Harrisville then. There was no difference in prices and we went to one store because Dad had gone there all his life.

You could get credit there and a lot of people did. But plenty of people paid cash because I remember one grocer used to put his money in a bucket to carry it home with him. He was never robbed that I recall. The kids always got a bag of candy free at the grocery. After shopping there was always someone in the store to talk to. There was no movie or recreation in Harrisville so we went home after we were done shopping.

There was no crime that I remember. People left their bicycles around without locking them up. There were always a few hoboes travelling through but they never bothered anyone. Panhandlers would come to our house looking for a meal about twice a year. They would sleep in the one room schoolhouse. Everybody knew panhandlers slept there but they didn't bother them. I suppose hoboes often slept in one room schoolhouses; they were unlocked and were all over the countryside. The hoboes were not too clean but I suppose there was no way to prevent them entering the schoolhouses.

On Sunday we went to church in the afternoon because the minister had three churches. He preached in one in the forenoon, one in the afternoon, and one at night. There were about 40 people who attended our church. We were Baptist. We had a big meeting with an evangelist every winter and then the church would be full to overflowing. We had prayer meeting on Wednesday nights. Everyone went to church in those days, but some went because it was something to do. On the other hand, people were more interested in religion then than they are now, especially young people.

We played baseball on Saturday afternoons and either Tuesday or Thursday evenings beginning about 6 P.M. Sometimes we played at Pardoe, sometimes Wesley. When Model T Fords became common about 1916, we used them and we could travel farther to play games.

I bought my first Model T Ford in 1920 when I was 19 years old. The thing I most disliked about the car was cranking it because there was the danger of the crank kicking back. My brother broke his arm when the crank kicked back. You had to know how to turn the crank so that your arm was free to get out of the way if it kicked. The best way to start a car in the winter with the crank was to jack up the rear wheels and put the gear into high; then it would start easily. If it still didn't start you poured hot water on the carburetor; it was easy to get at then. They were pretty reliable cars and didn't break down very often. The tires were not very good though. If you went for a drive on a Sunday afternoon you had from two to four flat tires on the way. Cars carried at least two spare tires normally. We didn't travel very far on Sundays because the roads were poor and it was hard to get gas on Sundays.

The farthest I ever travelled before I got married was to Pittsburgh a couple of times. I would go down there and stay a few days. That was 1920. I would walk around and look in the stores and see the sights. It was very dirty and smoky. I didn't like Pittsburgh because of the grime and smoke. I didn't go to see the Pirates when I was in Pittsburgh. I didn't follow them until they began to broadcast the games on radio.

I met my wife when I was in Barkeyville to play a baseball game. I was walking down this alley and two or three girls came walking up the alley and that's how I met her. I would take her to the movies in Grove City on Saturday nights. It was not the Guthrie theater. We went to the theater that was located about where the Riverside supermarket is today. After the movie we could have gone to an ice cream parlor but my wife was kind of shy. Now you can't keep her out of them! Then I would drive her home to her farm. We courted for a couple of years; I was 25 when I married.

I tried hauling coal for about three years after I was married. I would buy it from the mines around here and take it by truck to Franklin and sell it to my customers. But then I went back into logging until 1977 when I retired. By that time the trees we cut were getting smaller and some were third or fourth cuttings.

We cut trees down with a cross cut saw. We sharpened it every day unless we hit something; then we had to sharpen it right away. We would then drag the logs out of the woods with a team. In the winter when the ground was hard and slippery, a team could pull out a lot that would cut a thousand board feet, about four feet in diameter; but in the summer a lot of 200-300 board feet was a load for the horses. Logging and sawing was a dangerous job. I knew of several men who got hit with falling tree limbs. And one time a fellow who was working at a sawmill with a big circular saw got his new overalls caught on a protruding bolt. He was whirled around and around with the circular saw until all his clothes except his shoes had spun off. My dad caught him in his arms finally. He was all bruised up so we didn't want to take him to Harrisville in a wagon. So we tied a blanket between two 2x4s and carried him for four miles into Harrisville.

If a logging job was too far to travel back and forth to we would build a shanty to live in until the job was done; that might be up to six months or so. Most winters when I was a boy my father was gone on a job. My mother handled discipline pretty well because we knew what would happen when Dad got home. When I first started working I gave all I earned to my parents. I didn't mind that; it was expected. Gradually I could keep more and more of my wages.

MARY FILER

I was born in 1898 in this house on East Market street, Mercer. I have never lived anywhere else. This house is old and shabby, but I don't want to go anywhere else; there are memories in every corner.

My maternal grandfather, Aaron Armstrong, was an engineer on the Mississippi and Red Rivers during the Civil War. He came home more or less a physical wreck. He then opened a gunsmith shop. If you ever see a gun engraved with "Aaron Armstrong" around here, it's his. He had three children, no money, and broken health, so it was my grandmother who took things into her own hands. She bought a little property up here on the Diamond and had a rooming and boarding house. It was located on the corner of the Diamond on North Pitt Street and Current Alley.

My father was a young attorney who had come to Mercer from Sandy Lake about 1890. There were many attorneys here and young men would come here to read law in the offices of older attorneys so that they could become lawyers. In those days you didn't often go to law school; that brought many eligible young men to Mercer and Grandmother had the boarding house. That's how my mother met my father and they were married in 1892. I was their only child and I came along six years later.

My father did not like to plead cases in court. He talked about one case he had pled in court. He defended a farm boy from up around Sandy Lake accused of stealing chickens. He was about to lose the case, the jury being unsympathetic to his client. But father won the case by telling the jury, "Now any of you jurors who are farm bred, where do your chickens come to at night?" Of course chickens come home to roost. And he won his case. Father was actually an investment counselor. He took care of people's money by investing it for them, mostly in mortgages.

This town was full of lawyers then because the roads were so bad that they had to live here in town. Today the easier travel means they are more spread out. It was quite a matrimonial area those days.

Father's family lived in Sandy Lake. His father was Alexander Moore. His mother was a Snow, but I'm not sure because I was never as close to them as to my mother's people. We would go up to Sandy Lake by buggy along the dirt roads. It took about four hours if Mother was along because she wouldn't let Father whip the horses and the roads were bad then. The Diamond was the only paved road in town. Then East Market street was paved next out of necessity. It was on a steep hill and when it was muddy it was impossible for horses to pull a wagon up it; and because the railroad was down at the bottom of the hill they couldn't detour around East Market St.

I remember one time we drove to Sandy Lake. We rented a horse and buggy up at Nickum's livery stable. Father had business in the country so Mother went along to visit at Sandy Lake and they took me. When we returned Father stopped in front of the house to let me out. Grandmother Armstrong came out to help me down. Just as she did the horse shied and threw her to the ground and she broke her hip. In those days a broken hip was bad news and she never walked again without a crutch. She lived with us and had my grandfather's pension from the Civil War.

We could take the train to Sandy Lake. In fact we could take a train to just about any place in the area worth going to. We could get on a train here and go to New York much easier than it is to take the train to New York today. Now you have to go to Pittsburgh first. There were three trains a day north and southwest on the Pennsylvania Railroad and three trains a day north and south on the Bessemer.

I think it was in 1913 that we bought a Model T Ford. It was the first Model T that didn't have the closed front seat; the entire passenger section was now roofed and had back side doors. It had a crank starter, a horn that you squeezed, and no gear shift; oh, it was the hardest car in the world to drive. And I was only 15 when I started driving it. Father still drove the car like he drove the horse. If he wanted to stop he'd holler, "Whoa!"

But the car wouldn't stop. And he wasn't a good driver anyway; he drove that car like it was a horse. Mother tried it once and that was enough for her. Then my aunt who lived with us tried it and she was the only female who could crank it. It was so hard to crank that we always parked on a hill if we could find one. Then we could start it by letting it roll down hill and suddenly putting it in gear. It had these big wheels with narrow tires and on muddy roads with deep ruts it was hard to steer. Once I drove up to Sandy Lake and how I kept that car on the road I have no idea.

Driving a team of horses around cars was even scarier than driving a car. One time Mother, my aunt and I drove up to Sandy Lake with a team of horses. Coming home we met a car, Dr. Whitman's old Buick, chugging up the road. Mother got scared because she knew the horses were going to bolt. She ordered me out of the surrey and she got out and bravely held the horses' heads. Dr. Whitman saw our predicament and stopped his car. He came over and helped Mother lead the horses off the road. It was still an eye-catching thing to own a car in those days. I can remember running to the window to see a car. Cars were so rare that I can still see in my mind's eye going to school and seeing one that got stuck in the mud on East Market street. And in the winter there were no cars to be seen at all; you put your car up for the winter. Father jacked it up to save the tires, drained the water [there was no antifreeze] from the radiator, and brought the battery into the cellar. Then he covered the car over with a blanket or something.

Only a few daring people drove their cars on Sundays for pleasure even in the summer. It was considered sinful, a worldly pleasure. We never drove on Sunday for pleasure except one time. We were taking our laundry to the foot of the hill in the East End and Father couldn't get turned around so we went out to the next crossroads. That was the only time we drove on Sunday. People started driving on Sundays after World War I. That war changed a great many things.

I was an only child whose mother was a strict disciplinarian with Victorian ideas, and her one ambition was to see me graduate from college. This I did from Oberlin College in 1919. I was not Phi Beta Kappa.

As a child I was given the Elsie Dinsmore books to read. There were 28 of these books. Elsie Dinsmore was an eight-year-old girl who had a "religious" complex. Anything that was fun was wrong and anything that had the least non-religious feel was taboo.

Adults felt the same way. Dances before World War I were held by the Social Circle, the country club of Mercer, next to where the Moose is now. Not everyone could join. It was pretty elite, the young attorneys, the young doctors, the girls who had gone to college and had brought their husbands or beaux home with them. The men all wore white ties and tails and the girls wore evening gowns; they were very formal. In order to get an invitation if you were a foreigner so to speak, and anyone who hadn't lived in Mercer for 50 years was a foreigner, you had to ask for an invitation. A couple of outsiders were once given permission to attend. They had liquor on their breath and they were never asked to come again. Mercer was a Prohibition town; you didn't drink publicly.

On occasion, they hired a name band from Pittsburgh. On advice from the leader, the members of the orchestra wore ordinary suits of clothes. The guests arrived in beautiful evening gowns and white ties and tails. The orchestra was so embarrassed that the leader apologized and said that if they could be invited back again they would come in proper attire and play for free.

Prohibition came in and automobiles were more numerous. Country clubs grew up in surrounding towns and liquor was dispensed liberally in Ohio. People joined the Sharon Country Club. Then there were the new Junior and Senior proms over at the high school. This led to the holding of regular dances at the high school for young people.

The Pew farm was on the Grove City road going east on the first hill past the cemetery. There are a couple of buildings left there. The original Pew who made money in oil wanted twelve children and I think he got them. They moved away but he brought them back here in the summer. They would come up to Trinity Church, it was the Secone Presbyterian Church then. They had horses and a three seated carry-all and every Sunday this Pew Carry-all would come over the hill loaded with Pew's. I never knew them but they were well-respected citizens. I never heard anything derogatory about the Pews. After they became wealthy they had no contact with the town.

We always went to the Mercer Fair. Mercer always had a relatively clean and decent fair. Stoneboro Fair was different in those days: anybody with money enough could set up his booth or whatever. It always rained on the Mercer Fair but it was always a beautiful day for the Stoneboro Fair. The Mercer Fair always had a reputation for being a much cleaner fair, so of course it went under. Everyone went to the Stoneboro Fair who could get there. At Mercer you could play bingo for blankets. That was the only gambling as far as I know. They had a merry go round, a ferris wheel, the stock show, and the stock parade, which was worth seeing. My father loved to see the harness races. Some of the churches in town would have eating stands. They had displays of womens' handiwork and prizes were given. Oh yes, the fairs were perfectly respectable. Mostly the food served was hot dogs and hamburgers. I think they had commercial buns, but they weren't so sophisticated and I don't think anyone had seen a long weiner bun as far as I can remember. They fried the hamburgers right there on the skillet. We had cotton candy then, too. But I never saw any beer or hard liquor there.

Most black people lived close to the better white homes. It began in the 1850's when somebody got the bright idea of freeing some slaves and bringing them up here and putting them onto some farms down by Indian Run south of town and they could make their own living. But these slaves had never been on their own before. He brought them up, put them in little shacks, winter set in, and they were from the South with no idea of how to cope with winter. So some of the more affluent families took these Negro families under their wings and made them household servants. These people became the Negro elite in Mercer.

They stayed here and became solid citizens: the Reeds and the Robinsons. One of the Reed girls became valedictorian of her class at Mercer high school.

These families became excellent cooks and lived with the Mercer families and learned the proper thing to do. John Fountain Reed was quite a cook and both his daughters went to college. One took cooking lessons some place and wrote a cook book on gourmet cooking. The other girl, a very pretty girl, accidentally fell into a tub of boiling water face first and was badly scarred. She had a voice that would melt your heart so she went to see Marian Anderson, the famous Negro singer of the 1930's. Marian Anderson said that she had voice equal to hers, but that she could never go on the stage because of her face. What a tragedy.

The Blacks had their own church at the end of Otter street near where the housing project is today. They used to have marvelous dinners there cooked by the man who cooked at the Mercer Sanitarium for years. But the church couldn't keep going as the old black families died out here. Race relations in Mercer were always good. The blacks did not intrude and they were all well looked after, especially if they had a white sponsor. I never knew of any racial trouble here in Mercer.

We had a Chinaman here too: Wing Lee. He had a fish cart and a pig tail; oh, we loved to see Wing Lee come down the street. He was here as long as I can remember. He lived over at the corner of the South Diamond.

The Opera house was next door north to the Magoffin house. It was on the second story of the block there. It was a fire trap. There was a big, long hall leading up to the stairs. My commencement exercises were held there because we had no auditorium at the high school then and this was a big place. Amateur theatricals were held there, and we had some good ones. Now and then a travelling theatrical troupe came to town or else summer lectures; this was a "college" town and the actors could expect a good turnout from the many professional people in town. They had movies there too; I believe this was the first nickelodeon movie theatre in town.

I remember an exciting criminal case tried here in 1909. The second court house had burned down so the trial was held up in the Old Mercer Academy. There were so many people there to see the trial that you could almost see the walls bulging. My father had a seat in attorney's row and one day he took me out of school to observe the proceedings.

It was a kidnapping case which was rare in those days. The Whitla family were a wealthy family in Sharon and related to the Buhl's. They had an eight-year-old boy named Billy. A man and a woman appeared at Billy's school pretending that they had been ordered to take him home because of an emergency. They took the boy to a certain house in Cleveland and demanded ransome. The whole county was talking about the case all the time. When they got the ransome they put the boy on a streetcar to ride it downtown where his family would be waiting. The kidnappers had been very good to Billy and they left him look out the window of the house where they kept him. Later, when he was asked about what he remembered, he recalled the number of the house across the street. The police took the boy around to all of the trolley conductors and asked the one who recognized Billy where on his route he had picked the boy up. With the number of the house that the boy remembered it wasn't long before they had found the house where the boy had been kept. They were then able to trace the occupants of the house and arrest them. They were Sharon people and not the desperado type; they just wanted the money. He was sentenced to life and his wife got a lesser sentence.

My father was librarian of the court house when the second court house burned down in 1907. I can remember that he was very anxious about the records being burned. The fire protection in Mercer then was pitiful. They had an old hand-pumper fire engine that took water from an old pump on the Magoffin lot. It was very cold and the fire occurred at night. The next day everyone went up to see the ruins. The walls were still standing but the insides were gutted. They managed to get some of the records out of the offices but not too many.

After the court house fire they decided that they ought to have a better fire engine and they bought a horse-drawn one. Then there was a fire down at the bottom of the hill. The fool fire department hitched up a team of horses to the engine with a rope about 20 feet long and started over right in front of me. It's a wonder they weren't all killed.

There are certain sounds I associate with the old days in Mercer. One of them is the sound of horses, hooves. Another is the sound of the railroad engines talking to each other at Houston Junction because that was where the Pennsylvania track crossed the Bessemer track and there was the danger of collision, so the engineers would warn each other that they were coming by blowing their whistles. Another sound you will never hear again is a boy or man coming down the street whistling; modern songs won't whistle.

The biggest store in town was Houston's dry goods store where the Murphy's store is today. Montgomery's drug store was the most popular store in town; it had a potbellied store with chairs around it that attracted people.

I imagine that the oldest inhabited house in this area is where the Brady's live now, located in Hell's Hollow. Going west on Route 62 out of Mercer you pass the Mercer woodworking shop just past the Ford agency and then as the road bends to the right there is a blacktop road on the left that veers due west off Route 62. Go down that road and you are in Hell's Hollow. If you don't take Hells Hollow Road but go up the hill you come to a big stone house sitting there and that is it. Its so old they haven't abused it too much; it is pretty much the way it was in the past. The stone steps down into the kitchen are very worn because they are the original steps. The house cost less than a thousand dollars to build and I think was built by the Stranahan family. The walls are two feet thick.

One story about Hell's Hollow was that an indian was killed ther and his spirit still walks up and down the road. It was very scarry going through the Hollow at night.

Another story is: There was a schoolhouse on top of the hill above the Hollow. If a pupil was unruly, the teacher took him by the scruff of the neck and threw him down into the Hollow.

I remember when Dr. Vogan came here in 1924 to found the Mercer Cottage hospital. He had absolutely nothing when he graduated from medical school. He had been a plasterer before he decided to become a doctor; he plastered this house. So it was a struggle to get him through school; I think he did plastering to earn money. Mercer desperately wanted a hospital after the state closed the Mercer Cottage hospital. So when Dr. Vogan wanted to take over the closed sanitarium a ladies' auxiliary was formed to help him.

And he didn't have anything when he started. The ladies sewed sheets on certain days of the week; they even made bandages. And they donated canned food for the patients to eat.

The Mercer post office has been located in a variety of places. One was the south side of East Market street at the Diamond where the Stranahan law office is today and which was where the extra cut stone from the latest court house were left. But before that it was a post office. In the days when the mail came in by train people would come and wait while the mail was changed and sorted. In those days there was no mail delivery in Mercer. Mail delivery in town didn't come in until about 1916 or 17. Rural Free Delivery had come in sooner than that. I can remember the rural mail carriers with their tired horses coming into town after a cold winter day of struggling through snow or mud; the mail carriers had buggies that looked like the Amish buggies of today to protect them a little from the weather. They had a hard job.

The Amish have always been in the New Wilmington area as long as I can remember, but they came to this area fairly recently. When they bought a house they would tear out the plumbing and wiring. And they have only elementary one-room schools. The Amish come to the farmer's market in New Wilmington every Friday and you should hear the beautiful English they use; it would put many of our high school graduates to shame.

For some years I taught at Grove City College and commuted from Mercer. The Grove City road was a mean road to drive in bad weather: a gravel road with a high crown and deep ditches on both sides. There were no snow tires in those days either. But I always made it. I wouldn't do it now. One day I'll never forget. I had a 7:40 class to teach and it was snowing heavily when I got up and had been snowing all night. The only way that I could see the way to Grove City was to follow the telephone poles. I went the whole distance in second gear and saw several cars in the ditch. I finally made it into the parking lot at the college and promptly skidded into a snow bank.

When they announced the discontinuance of passenger service on the Bessemer in the 1950's I decided to take a last trip on the railroad from Grove City to Mercer. The train had just a steam engine, baggage car and one coach. The coach was full of commuting workers from the Bessemer plant. It was a very congenial ride: the men were going home from work and the coach was cozy on a cold night. We stopped at Pardoe and a little man and woman got off. I can still see them plowing through the snow up the hill. We backed into Mercer as usual from Houston Junction and there was Father waiting for me at the station.

My husband was the Mercer postmaster and I have never forgotten one incident that occurred. A large sum of money almost \$10,000 was delivered to the post office; how it got here I don't know. The Mercer post office was not considered safe enough for that money to be kept overnight. It was snowing and the usual driver to Sharon said that he was not going out that night with the roads as bad as they were. My husband couldn't allow that so he promised the driver a state police escort and he got it. It was a long night for me waiting for them to get back, but they made it safely.

As long as I can remember there has been a grocery store in the I.O.O.F. building on the Southeast corner of the Diamond. Davey Aiken had it when I was a girl at the turn of the century. It was dirty, filthy, and stocked stale goods; but you got an awful lot of candy for a penny. Davey preferred playing checkers in the back room. One day he was playing checkers when a lady came in and the other checker player said, "Davey, there's someone in the store." And Davey replied, "Pay no attention. She'll probably go away." He was a good-looking man with long white hair, but rather dirty. And he kept a parrot in the store. At one time there was a little office at the front of the grocery store but they took that out later on.

The Old Mercer Sanitarium was located down the East Market street hill. It was a private hospital for wealthy people. In the park it had little private cottages for those who could afford them, and they have renovated some of them and they are residences now.

George Humes ran the old Whistler House on the northeast corner of the Diamond until it burned in 1916. Then he bought the Reznor hotel on the West Diamond at the corner of West Market street and renamed it the Humes hotel. It was torn down only about ten years ago. He had an excellent dining room there; his wife was a fine cook. At one time he had a license to sell liquor and a little cocktail room but that didn't pay. He had excellent meals and people came from out of town to eat there; Mercerites entertained there. We were heart sick when it was torn down, there was no parking there and it had become dangerous.

There was some fuss when they came up with the idea in the 1940's of consolidating the schools. All the rural one room schools in this area were to close and be bussed into Mercer to go to a modern school with more teachers and facilities. Some rural people felt that country kids were not as well educated by the one room schools and that they would be discriminated against. As it turned out there was no problem because the rural kids had been very well drilled in the three R's, since they heard each grade's drill every day.

In 1915 I was in the first high school class to graduate from what was then the brand new combined elementary high school on East Butler street. When I entered high school in 1911 there was only one teacher, but they expanded to four years and four teachers because they changed the curriculum. Formerly there were nine years of elementary school and three years of high school. Now in 1911 they went to the eight and four years that we recognize today. Most kids went to high school to get ready for college. At that time all the high school courses were college preparatory courses. There were only 20 students in my graduating class. They changed to a four year program because Mercer students were having trouble getting into college with only three year's of high school preparation.

For a while the Mercer Academy competed with the new East Butler street school for students. You had to pay to attend the Academy and it had more prestige. But my impression is that there was really no difference in the quality of instruction and the fact is that the Academy soon went out of business.

The court house does not look exactly the same as it did. At one time it had a terra cotta dome which was a gleaming white color which reflected the sun off it in an almost dazzling manner.

But it chipped and cracked so they put the present dome on during the 1940's. Many people at the time didn't like the change.

Within the last 25 years every now and then a body will be returned to Mercer to be buried in the Old Cemetery; people who wanted to be buried at home. That cemetery holds what we kids used to call the "Devils Monument". It is a large stone, peaked on top, with no name on it and surrounded by four pine trees. No one knew when or even who had put it there. When we were children and were brought to affairs at the old First Presbyterian Church we were allowed to play in the cemetery. It was not a pretty monument and it frightened us children and we named it the "Devil's Monument".

Henrietta Magoffin and Mrs. J.W. Ayres donated the building and much money to get the Mercer County Historical Society going. Henrietta Magoffin was very well read and was brilliant. Mrs. Minnie Ayres belonged to an old Mercer family named Ride, I think. Jim Ayres did very well at the Resnor Company. They got married in Grove City and they hired a railroad train to take the wedding party and guests to Grove City. They had a band playing on board. The year was between 1905 and 1910 because I was a very small girl.

We never had movies on Sunday here although surrounding communities did allow them to be shown from the late 1920's on. The reason was that a lack of patronage at the Liberty theater was always a problem and even fewer people in Mercer went to the movies on Sunday so it was not economically feasible. The Liberty theater closed for good after World War II mostly because of the wild behavior of young people in the theater. Mercer became a bit rowdy during the war and after the war young people were not well-behaved at the theater. The back of the theater was a great place for young lovers and it got out of hand. And any film showing deep emotion, that was really good art, they would make fun of and mock. This drove away adult patronage and the theater had to close.

We had more personal service from the telephone operators before they put in dial phones than we have now. I knew the operators' names. I can still remember Ruth Lytle, and Dorothy McElrath before she was married. The operators knew our voices and would recognize us just by hearing us speak. And they performed services that dial phones can't. For instance, if you gave the operator a person's name you wanted to talk with she might say, "You wouldn't get her, she's up at church." The operators also helped with dinner party arrangements which were usually made by phone. I can remember telling the operator, "I'm going to have this line for quite a while so just stick with it." And then you would send that operator a box of chocolates for her help.

When someone put on a big luncheon for 60 or 70 people, that was a big affair and the invitations were delivered in a grander manner. The hostess would always get Mrs. Luch Berry, a colored woman, to deliver the invitations by hand. And Luch would be at her elegant best. She would come down the street with her list of invited guests; she could read and write. Every woman on the street would be behind the window curtains wanting to know, "Am I invited or am I not?" Of course they also wanted to know who else had been invited.

The Women's Christian Temperance Union [WTCU] was very strong here when I was a girl but it faded away in the 1920's. The older ladies died off, the younger ladies began to enjoy a cocktail, and the youngest ladies wouldn't join it. Prohibition was the worst piece of legislation this country ever had, the most disastrous. It brought the Mafia in, and it brought a disrespect for law and order that has persisted to this day. And then of course it changed the drinking habits of the middle class. The middle class in Mercer didn't drink before Prohibition, or at least they didn't advertise it. People had liquor in their houses but not for public drinking; cocktails were unknown here until after Prohibition began. Then it became fashionable to drink. Before Prohibition my aunt wouldn't even drink ginger ale because it came out of a bottle; that tells you where she stood before Prohibition. But even she made some medicinal dandelion wine during Prohibition; it was delicious incidently. She was very afraid that the corks would pop and someone would discover that she had dandelion wine secreted in her basement, but it was fashionable to have it and she did.

Mercer was well supplied with doctors until it became easier to go to a clinic or hospital. One was Dr. George Yeager. He was the only man in Mercer for whom the court house bell rang for his birth. He was the only boy after 8 or 9 girls. He was a typical family Doctor. What he knew, he knew and what he didn't know he didn't fool with. The patient felt better the minute Dr. Yeager's footstep was heard on the porch.

There wasn't any community-owned garbage collection in the early days because there wasn't any garbage to collect. We bought very few canned goods; people canned at home and bought bulk goods at the grocery. And we burned the paper in the coal stove. Later, in the 1930's I think, people hired someone to pick up what garbage they had. Don Rigby operated a grocery store and the garbage man once told me, "The Rigby's have the best swill in town."

Don Rigby was a character. One time one of the Jackson sisters came into his store because there was a sale on canned beans. She asked him if the beans were all right because people didn't use much canned goods and were afraid of them. "Well, Miss Jennie," says Don, "we've had very good reports from those beans." Another time Don was busy dressing his store window when a car pulled up and tooted its horn. After several more toots on the horn Don thought it must be an emergency and ran out to see what was the matter. The driver said, "Could you tell us how to get to Sharon?" And Don said, "I take the bus." We could take tourists or leave them.

There were many new people in Mercer during and after World War II and the town accepted them in its own way. But if you really wanted to get into the Mercer swim you had to join the proper church and, if you were a woman, you had to play bridge.

There were two funeral directors in Mercer. The first was Norris Huey, but the funeral was too much for him. Then the Miller's came in and they had charisma and know-how. They didn't include a funeral home until the 1920's because until then people were content to bury family members from their front parlor, in their own home. There was a black crepe or funeral wreath hanging on the front door. Actually it is much better the new way, having the body at a funeral home; it takes away the constant strain of having guests in the house paying their respects. Of course it was much more intimate the old way.

As an octogenarian who has lived 85 years in the same house in which I was born, I know a few of the Mercer folks tales and have seen the change from a sleepy little county seat into a more cosmopolitan, less Victorian social consciousness than was here at the start of the 20th century. Some of this is remembered here.

VIRGINIA CORNELIUS - 1910

I was born in Jackson Center but was raised in Grove City. My father was a coal mine foreman. He and Mother were dyed-in-the-wool Republicans who loved to discuss politics. That was before radio and television and the morning Pittsburgh Press newspaper was very important in our house, and we discussed what we read. I can remember the cartoon on page one when war was declared in 1917. It stressed the dismay of many people because Wilson had been elected by claiming that he would keep us out of the war. But by 1917 we did realise that war was inevitable because of the American lives being lost when German submarines sank ships. I can remember very well when the Lusitania was sunk, the headlines in the paper. Everyone thought it was unfair of the Germans and everyone discussed it.

When the war started I remember the "Company M boys", the local National Guard unit, left for the war from the Armory. My mother took me and my sister very early in the morning to see Company M leave on a troop train from the siding at the armory. I remember vividly the great anguish that everyone felt at their leaving. It seemed like the nicest, strongest and best young men in the community were leaving.

There were no pro-Germans that I remember in this community before we entered the war, but there was a family who had recently come from Germany that lived here. Many people here gave them a hard time; they were very aloof. But they had a daughter who I thought was a wonderful person. There was a good deal of anti-German feeling here even before we entered the war. My father didn't say much but Mother popped off about them; she didn't think much of them.

By this time my father had left coal mining and came to work at the Bessemer Gas Engine Company, as it was known then. Father decided that coal mining was too hard on you, especially the coal dust in the lungs and the dampness.

There were many foreigners coming into this area about that time to work in the mines. The Grove City Women's Club was organized in 1918 so that those who cared could help immigrant women learn how to get along in the community, like teaching them to speak English. The foreign men were learning to speak English on their jobs, but the foreign women stayed home with their children and had no opportunity to learn English.

In the 1920's the Women's Club established a mosquito abatement program by organizing the use of waste oil in spraying mosquito breeding grounds. When it was perceived that poorer families needed nursing care and instruction in hygiene, the Women's Club founded the visiting nurse program. The Women's Club underwrote the financing of this until the community could take it over. The Club also paid the salary of an art teacher in the schools in the 1940's. It started playgrounds around town until the United Fund came along to take that over. By the 1950's the Club sponsored an arts and crafts show every spring in which anyone in the community could exhibit his work. The exhibition was first held in the ballroom of the Penn-Grove hotel and then it was moved to the Fine Arts Building on the campus. We helped to found the community library too.

To earn money for its projects the Women's Club would hold an annual bazaar in the fall and we would make \$3000-\$4000 in one day, all of it used for charity. We sold apple butter at the bazaar. We had a camp in the country where we worked for two days stirring up 6 big kettles of apple butter each day. That was a lot of work. But even at that we couldn't supply all the demand for our apple butter. But it got to be so great a burden that it became a question of whether the club had a bazaar or the bazaar had a club.

During World War II the community organized a USO over in the armory because there were sailors getting trained at Grove City College. We used to make cookies by the hundreds and take them over there. They had open house for the men on Friday and Saturday nights especially. We were limited in cookie making because we had to have sugar ration coupons, so if we could convince Ed Blair, the storekeeper, that we were going to use the sugar without requiring coupons.

One time during the war the Cooper-Bessemer brought over 15 Englishmen who stayed here almost a year. At that time many of the ships were powered by Cooper-Bessemer engines and the Englishmen were here to observe how they were built. They stayed over at the Penn-Grove hotel. Through my husband I got to know them and they were very interesting to talk to. One of them came back later and married a girl he had met here.

I knew the man I would later marry most of my life. His father and my father would walk to work together. We began to date more and more frequently and one time I will never forget my future husband took me to Cleveland in his car. We got up very early in the morning, for it was a big undertaking to drive to Cleveland in those days. It was bitter cold that day too, and the car heater was none too good. But I got to see Paul Whiteman and his orchestra. Big deal! We didn't get home until about 2 in the morning, but my mother felt I was in good hands.

In the 1950's when my kids had grown up and I had learned to drive I looked for a job. I went on a Saturday in 1960 and asked for a job on the Grove City Reporter. I was hired and was immediately told to get the society page out for Tuesday's paper. I about swallowed my teeth but I did it; from then on I did the society page and feature articles for four years. I especially enjoyed society reporting because you found out everything that was going on in town! Who was marrying whom, all the parties etc., I loved it.

I remember when the Tower Presbyterian Church was built in 1926. When we were ready to move in all of us assembled in the old Presbyterian church that was over on the corner of Broad and Main, and walked over to the new building singing "Onward Christian Soldiers". I was about 16 and it was very impressive to me. The site for the new church was somewhat controversial. Some suggested that it ought to be located on a back street, but someone with influence insisted that it be on the Broad street location so that's where it went. I guess nobody thought then that parking would be the problem it has become. An old, frame house stood there before the church was built; college women lived in it.

All I, and all the girls of my era, wanted to do was to get married. But now if I had it to do over again I would certainly rather go into some career rather glamorous like journalism. I don't feel cheated, I've had a wonderful life. I was not forced when young to think only of marriage, that was entirely up to me. But we all knew that inevitably that was what would happen to us, so we didn't think of a career.

I also belonged to the Women's Auxiliary to the Grove City Hospital, organized in the 1920's. The Women's Club also contributed to the hospital but the Auxiliary did so much that they didn't need much help. They sponsored the hostess shop in the 1950's at the hospital and we all worked to keep it going. They got their cash fund in the same way that the Women's Club did, by working for it.

The Grove City Hospital always had a good reputation for a small hospital. Its first location was at the corner of Elm and Main in a house that sits up high. It couldn't have had more than 10-12 beds. It was not until 1921 that the first hospital building was built. It was built by popular subscription and we were very proud of it. Mercer people came over to use our hospital until they built their own.

There was never any crime here to speak of, although we did have a murder here in the late 1960's when Margaret McCoy was killed and nobody to this day knows who killed her. She was a maiden lady, a retired music teacher who lived with her sister, another maiden lady, and one lovely May afternoon someone came in and beat her to death.

The biggest change in Grove City that I have seen is that people are more stand-offish than they used to be. We used to be a community where everybody knew everybody else and was willing to help everybody else. We're more aloof now.

Relations with the Blacks of Grove City have always been good. There is no "across the tracks" here. Long before equal rights was even thought of, in 1930, the Grove City football team had the first Black captain of the football team. His name was Bill Murphy. He served with honor in the war and died of war injuries.

This town is heavily Republican and I can't remember a Democrat ever being on Council. There's never been a woman either although I was once asked to run. I declined with thanks; that was one hassle I didn't need.

MAUDE CORYEA - 1900

I was born in McKeesport in 1900. My father was a bricklayer. In 1909 we moved to a farm. Both my parents had been raised on farms and they thought it would be better to raise us eleven children on a farm. The farm was located on the Mercer-Butler Pike about five miles north of Slippery Rock just beyond Valcourt at Amsterdam. London was not much of a town then. There was a blacksmith shop and a little one room grocery store in a house.

I was a city girl and country living was hard to adjust to. I had been in the third grade in the city school, but they put me back to first grade in the rural school because I had not been taught the ABC's and basic reading. That was Number 3 School at Amsterdam. I don't think country school was as good as city school. When you finished one book you went into the next one; there were no grades at all. That was not good; you never knew where you were. You could be in first grade history, but fourth grade arithmetic. All my children attended Number 3 School at Amsterdam, but they liked it better because they never knew city school. That old brick school is still there, about 100 yards east of the Mercer-Butler Pike at Amsterdam. Route 258/.

I don't know why our village was called Amsterdam. We had a blacksmith shop and a one room grocery store just like London. The only thing that has changed about Amsterdam is the trailer court they have just put in east of the town. It had about six houses then and still does. After I married we moved to Grove City for five years, but then we moved back to Amsterdam. And I'm glad we did because everybody knew each other and would help each other when it was needed.

After school finished I worked in Grove City for a couple of years when I met my first husband. He was a country boy who had moved to town just like me. He had begun working in coal mines when he was only 13 and he injured himself there. Then he went swimming in stagnant water of some kind and he must have swallowed some because he got typhoid fever and it settled into his arm muscles. He was in Mercer hospital for two years. I met him later when he worked at Cooper-Bessemer.

I didn't go to high school because with eleven children there was no money for it. At 16 I started doing house work in Grove City. There was nothing else for me to do: with only an eighth grade education and being a woman there was no other work available to me. I didn't give any money home because I lived with the people I worked for. I was housekeeper, maid, and anything they wanted me to do. It was 14 rooms of work. I worked for President Ketler of Grove City College. After supper dishes I was free and I received \$4 per week for a seven day week. That was not a lot of money and I barely had money enough to buy my clothes; there was no money for luxuries. For fun on Saturday nights my girlfriends and I would go walking downtown to meet boys. That's how I met my husband. Once in a while if we had any money we would buy something. Once a month I got a Sunday off to visit Mother and Father at home.

I married in 1919 when I was eighteen. We moved into a house just across the bridge on East Main street on the north side; it's torn down now. Our rent was \$15 a month. It was very hard to make ends meet because of my husband's illness. I was married three months when he began to have convulsions. It was the after effects of having the 1918 influenza.

That 1918 influenza epidemic was terrible. I had it and all my brothers and sisters had it. I think the reason it killed so many was that most houses were only heated in one room in those days. My brother-in-law got up sick in the night and spent the whole night in the cold bathroom. Within two days he was dead.

My husband and I had four children. For fun we would go to the movies in Mercer where the Liberty Theater held a weekly "family night"; that meant a family could get in for half price.

The depression was very hard on us because it was difficult for healthy men to find work, let alone a sick man like my husband. He was out of work much of the time. I helped by working whenever I could: housecleaning and hanging wallpaper. I would always come home at night to take care of my family. The W.P.A. work projects helped. When my husband couldn't work my 18-year-old son would take his place with the W.P.A. It was always a struggle and the depression wasn't over for us in 1939 when my husband died. One W.P.A. project was making the park in Grove City. That winter was very cold, sometimes -30°, and my husband had to walk to and from the park from Amsterdam. The walk took an hour. Another W.P.A. project was extending the paved road out our way from Center Church. My husband would arrive home about 6 P.M. and we would go to bed between 8 and 9 because he would have to be up at about 5 A.M.

When my husband was sick I would read to him at night. We had a wind-up victrola but no radio. We got electricity in 1939. You got it when the line passed your house and it didn't come our way until 1939. You had to tear up the floors and walls to put it in. With electricity, I got a washer. My first appliance. I married my second husband in 1946 and I didn't get my first radio until about 1950. I got my first refrigerator about the same time. Before that we had a spring house.

When my first husband died my three older kids could get along, but I had an eight-month old baby. When I got house cleaning jobs I took the baby with me. Things got the best of me sometimes. Things got better during World War II. My second son was drafted and sent home an allotment and I got a good job at Cooper-Bessemer. I started at 63¢ an hour and got a raise every three months. That was good money compared to house cleaning wages.

I didn't move into Grove City after my husband died because I had almost paid off the mortgage. We bought the house and one acre in 1924 for \$800. We didn't have a cent so we got a loan for \$400 as a down payment. It took us years to pay off that loan. Then we had to pay off the other \$400 with interest.

It has been a hard life. What sustained me? I don't know; you just take life one day at a time.

JOSEPH FRAZIER - 1911

My great-grandfather came into this area about 1810. He bought 500 acres for \$1.50 an acre. He was Scotch-Irish. The earliest records show him living in Washington County when he was a boy. One day his teacher informed his class that General Washington was going to come through their area in his coach drawn by six horses. When Washington came by, the whole school went outside to watch him pass.

Grandfather dammed up a stream and built a water-operated saw mill with an up and down saw /circular saws had not yet been invented/. It sawed very slowly; if a worker put a log into the mill he could eat his lunch before the saw would work its way through the log; but it beat doing it by hand. Parts of the dam are still there.

I was born in 1911 on a farm adjacent to great-grandfather's farm. When I was a boy we fished in our stream and caught suckers and chubs to eat. My uncle would go down with a bucket and reach under the sod bank and scoop fish up into the bucket on the bank and we'd have a lot of fish in a few moments. Occasionally he would get a snapping turtle too. In the spring after a flood when the water receded, us kids would find turtles high and dry and turn them over on their backs and then catch them. In those days a peddler would come by the house once a week to buy our farm produce such as eggs, chickens and butter. He would also buy the turtles from us if we had any. We never ate turtle but they are a great delicacy. We probably didn't know how to dress a turtle but only because they didn't appeal to us.

Everybody in our community hunted. My dad had a single shot muzzle-loading rifle; that was the only gun we had, no shotgun or .22. We used it for hunting and for killing farm animals at butchering time. When I was about 14 in 1925 my father bought me a single shot .22 rifle which I still have and which is still very accurate. We used the muzzle-loader as a working hunting rifle into the 1920's because dad didn't want to use the money to buy a modern one and the old one was still serviceable. Other people were using shotguns and .22's by then, but dad took such good care of his rifle that he saw no reason to discard it. I think that muzzle-loader dated to about 1860.

Funerals were different from today when I was a boy. They were held in the home of the deceased. There was open house for two or three days like they do at the funeral home now. The neighbors would visit from a reasonable time in the morning until a reasonable time in the evening. They would stay to eat and the ladies of the community would prepare food so that it became a social event. Families are just as involved in funerals today as they were then, but neighbors participated more in the old days. By my day the body was prepared by a funeral director, although this was probably done in an earlier day by a neighbor who got a reputation for handling that sort of thing.

We didn't travel much then. In all his life my father got to Pittsburgh once when he was a boy. New Castle or Butler was as far as he usually went.

I don't remember any weddings because most young people just took a day off and drove to Butler or to the minister's house and got married. A day or two later there would be the serenade; I remember the serenades. They would come at night to surprise the newlyweds. They expected a treat; candy and cigars were the usual things offered. The usual practice was to take the bride and groom for a ride; by horse and wagon or sled in the winter time, and later by automobile. When my wife Ruth and I were married in 1933 we were serenaded at my parent's home. They came in from a good distance all around and make a good deal of noise with cow bells, shotguns and even dynamite. I still remember they put us into the bed of a pickup truck and the fellow who was driving was noted as a very fast and reckless driver. He started off like he was on a race track, but after a mile or two he slowed down. There was no set time for the serenade but it usually occurred on the second or third day after the wedding; part of the game was to keep the newlyweds guessing about when it would occur. Word would circulate through the community when the serenade was to occur and word had a way of getting around even without the telephone. This practice died out in the 1930's and clearly came to an end with the coming of World War II in this area. People went on honeymoons if they could get away, but since most people were engaged in farming it was impractical to leave the farm for any length of time. Honeymoons, when possible, were only for a day or two and it wasn't very far away. Conneaut Lake was a favorite because there were railroad connections there. Niagara Falls was practically unheard of.

Before roads were paved they were impassable all winter long, from about Thanksgiving time until early in April. My dad brought a Model T Ford in 1922, our first automobile. One or two of our neighbors had a car a year or two earlier. In the middle of November, depending on the weather, we would remove the battery from the car and put it in the basement for the winter, jack the car up and put blocks under it to keep the tires from going flat over the winter. Tires lost their air more easily than they do today. About every time you bought gas you had to put air in the tires. Most people had had hand-worked air pumps until service stations began to advertise "free air"; "free air" was a big deal in those days.

It was absolutely impossible to drive on those old roads in winter. They were narrow so there was no room to avoid mud holes, the mud would be axle deep, and they would freeze and get very rough. In fact during my first year in college, 1927, my dad made a few trips to Slippery Rock /not many because I didn't get go home often/ and wore out a set of tires in just a few trips because the roads would freeze solid. There would be a cart track to ride in and it would freeze a little tight. You had to ride in the rut, there was no other place to drive, and so it just chewed the sidewalls out of the tires. Tires weren't nearly as tough as they are now. Some things have deteriorated today from yesterday but tires are as they are now, much better than they were then. And of course the roads were often drifted shut with snow; they were then even impassable to horse-drawn vehicles. Farmers had to pull down fence and go through fields much of the year. In March or when a break in the weather occurred farmers would get out and hand-shovel the roads open.

I remember when it got warm in April there would still be great piles of snow along the road that had been shovelled off the road by farmers to get through.

We did very little traveling on our roads during the winter. There was little need to go to town because we grew most of what we needed and we stocked up on needed items in the fall. About all we did was "neighboring", when we would help each other out with logging and such. We didn't get lonely because we didn't know any better; it was just the way things were.

We amused ourselves during the long winter nights by roasting chestnuts by the fire, ate apples, cracked nuts, and played games like checkers. It may seem dull today because there is now so much to do, but it sufficed us in a slower age. We always had chores to do: the animals to tend, wood to chop, coal to bring in. People heated by a combination of coal and wood, since both were easily accessible. There were a number of small coal mines, we called them, in our community. They were drift mines opening out onto the side of a hill, or bank. The veins were thin, only about three feet thick, and a man had to crawl on his hands and knees to dig the coal. The customer shovelled his own coal into his wagon, but the owner did the digging because it took some skill to dig coal inside a mine. My father thought coal was very expensive in those days because the farmer earned so little cash. I recall my father paying 5¢ a bushel and there were 20 bushels to the ton so that makes about \$1 per ton. Today that would seem dirt cheap but if the price rose a penny my father complained about inflation because we were so cash poor. We were lucky to get 5¢ a dozen for our eggs and all farm produce sold very cheap, so in terms of labor that coal cost him as much as it does today in the amount of labor expended to buy it.

At Christmas time I always got an orange or two or we considered that a very great luxury. We always had a little candy around the house, especially since Mother was fond of candy. She would buy a half pound of "haystack" chocolate for 8¢ a pound sometimes. This chocolate was wide at the bottom and tapering up to the top and it reminded people of a haystack so that's what we called it. They were actually chocolate drops because there was a white colored soft center. They were a great treat in those days. My mother would buy a pound box of dates at Christmas time too. We would ration them out, one a day to make them last longer. Usually among my Christmas presents was some new cloth from which my mother would make me some new shirts; I thought that was great. After all, it's not much different from a man today buying his wife a practical gift like a new stove for Christmas. We would usually get three, four or five Christmas tree because there were very few evergreens in our community. But if my father happened to be going to McConnell's grist mill about six miles from our farm, he would ask Mr. McConnell if he could cut down a hemlock tree. And since there were many such trees on Mr. McConnell's land he would usually allow it. But I can remember only one or two Christmas trees in my youth; it was a wonderful treat to have a Christmas tree. They didn't have Christmas trees for sale in those days, at least not out in the country. The first reforestation project in this area, which would have meant the planting of evergreens in large numbers, did not occur until the 1920's as I recall, and it was not until the 1940's that Christmas trees were sold in Slippery Rock.

I helped with one of those reforestation projects when I was in high school. A gentleman named Dr. McClymonds reforested a hundred acre farm and engaged high school boys to plant the trees. He paid us $\frac{1}{2}$ a cent each for planting them. He was a retired medical doctor and conservation was beginning to be recognized as a good idea so he wanted to do something for his country by pushing conservation. Those trees are still growing today because the Government gave the trees under the stipulation that they not be cut for something like 50 years.

I went to McConnell's mill a number of times with my father or grandfather. It was about six miles from home. The Slippery Rock area had from 10 to 14 grist mills so I think most farmers were no more than 6-8 miles from a mill. There were no particular times of the year that we went to the mill, but since it was an all day trip we tried to take a full load when we went. Sometimes we would take some of Grandfather's grain and sometimes he would take some of ours. Normally we would travel to the mill three or four times a year to keep ourselves supplied with flour. Buckwheat flour was a specialty of McConnell's mill; there was so much produced in this area that Mr. McConnell would buy our surplus, grind it and ship it to more distant places. The grinding, was done on a toll basis, meaning that no money was paid for the grinding, but a portion of the ground grain was kept by the miller. The portion varied from mill to mill but I think the usual fee was 10 per cent.

We thought very highly of Mr. McConnell; he was a respected man. Millers were generally a cut above the average economically; they were looked up to as men of wealth. I'm sure some farmers thought millers were cheats, but I never heard anything but words of respect for Mr. McConnell. Now a local man in Slippery Rock did tell me that while working in a mill he discovered a hole in the mill elevator where the flour accumulated as it was ground, and a small amount of flour was seeping out onto the second floor of the mill. He thought he would do the miller a good turn so he nailed a board over that hole. The owner of the mill told him to mind his own business when told that the hole had been repaired; in other words that was a small yet hidden way that the miller cheated.

Going to the mill was a social occasion. There was almost always someone else at the mill because you went without making an appointment; there were not many telephones in the country then. You took your turn. Sometimes there was so long a line that we had to leave our grain and come back for the flour another day. This did not happen frequently. When it did it was very disappointing because it was such a long and arduous trip and this meant it would have to be made over again. But as far as us kids were concerned the trip as much fun as a school trip to Seaworld is today. We would pack a lunch and have a picnic. I never went in the winter time because school was on and it would be too cold anyway for a youngster. But in the summertime it was awfully nice to get down along the stream and into those hemlocks; it was cool in there. The grist mill was a political place too. Farmers would exchange information there and this included political views.

We got to see the milling done. We were permitted into the building, and my father would tell me each time, "Don't go too near the machinery! Watch out for the pulleys! But before we went in we had to unload the grain.

At the west end of the mill you could back your wagon up to the building, and there was a pulley and a rope hanging out of the third story gable end. A mill hand would drop the rope which had a noose at the end and we would fit a bag of grain into the noose and the bag would be hoisted, hand over hand, up to the third story and emptied into the bins from where it would run down into the mill be the ground.

The mill hand at McConnell's mill was "Nigger Mose". No disrespect was intended, everybody called him that. He was the son of a lady who had been a slave before the Civil War. Mr. McConnell's father had got her and her son to come to work at the mill and Mose grew up there as the mill hand. He lived his life out there, and even after the mill closed Mose stayed there in his little house. He was a congenial gentleman and was known far and wide. He liked to tell jokes to the kids and he also liked to frighten the kids too. He scared me very badly one time. I had never seen a black man before and he came at me with his hands shaped like claws and growling like a cat and I kept backing away and he kept coming at me. I saw the half grin on my grandfather's face and couldn't understand why he wasn't protecting me. I was about as scared as I had ever been when I backed into the corner and could retreat no more. But just as he got close to me he pulled out a piece of candy and gave it to me with a laugh. He also told jokes. One time he asked, "Do you know what kind of hair grows on a dog's tail?" I shook my head and he chuckled, "Why dog hair, of course! Ho! Ho! Ho!" Mose was the only black man in the community and probably, in those days, one of the few black men even including Sharon and New Castle. I faintly remember his mother; I saw her a couple of times. She was a small lady, very elderly when I saw her. She is buried at the Hill Church in Portersville, as is Mose. He was still around in the 1930's and I think he died in the 1940's.

How did Mose and his mother come to this area? I suppose Mr. McConnell's father may have come across him in Pittsburgh and seen that he was a strong and healthy young man, and needing a mill hand, promised him steady work and a home if he would come out and work at the mill. In fact he was an excellent mill hand and worked there all his life.

Speaking of Blacks, nothing was ever said about the Underground Railroad in my community. I first learned of it in the history books at school. Hearsay later made it out that west of Portersville there was reputed to be a station on the Underground Railroad. There may have been something to it because there was an Underground Railroad station in Mercer and the mill was about due south of Mercer.

I don't remember much about politics except some stories my grandfather told me. He told me that in the 1840's and 1860's at the Pleasant Valley one room school in our neighborhood the Democrats and the Whigs were rivals [the Republicans replace the Whigs in 1856]. The school was the center of our rural locality and each party tried to get the edge on the other by erecting a flagpole with its own party flag, probably homemade, nailed to the top of the pole. When this was successfully done the other party would try to get it down. After the first flag was ripped off the pole, the pole was greased so that it could not be climbed. Then the other party would try to sneak in and chop down the pole. So there was a certain amount of friendly and not so friendly rivalry between people of the two parties.

The only thing that I personally felt toward politics was that I came to feel like an underdog because my family were Democrats. And there weren't many Democrats around here in those days! I always thought it unfair that my family weren't Republicans like everyone else! I don't know how it came to be that my family were Democrats. I do remember going with my father on a few occasions to a Democratic caucus meeting. There were no lights in the school so we all carried our lanterns, and in the dim light they hammered out a slate of Democratic candidates for local offices. The caucus was usually only a handful of people because Democrats were so scarce in our community. I can remember my father saying with relief, "Well at least we have a slate of candidates." I don't think the Democrats ever won any office that I can remember; they were overwhelmed. I don't know why my father was a Democrat. I think it was because his father had been a Democrat.

I entered school in 1918 at age six in a one room school. There were five or six such schools in our township. These schools were usually taught by some local person who had gotten his or her certification to teach by taking a county examination. During my elementary education I had only one teacher who had attended college. That was my eighth grade teacher who had attended college for a total of six weeks in a summer session at Slippery Rock Normal School, as it was known then. A college education certainly makes a difference, but I had very good teachers who served me very well. They were dedicated and this compensated for their lack of knowledge. I got an education that served its purpose reasonably well. But many of the things that are referred to as the "frills" of education today were lacking then, and that is a lack which I am sure I have felt through life. The curriculum was very simple but we did get very good drill in the fundamentals. In fact I would suggest that we got a better education than in modern schools in subjects which respond to drill like grammar, spelling and numbers.

There was much less interference by parents in education then, I think, because there was more respect for the teacher and it was assumed that she knew what she was doing. Prett largely the teacher was free to run the school as she saw fit. Parents, particularly the mothers, would make it a point to visit the school once or twice a year to sit in and observe, mainly to see if she were keeping proper order and discipline. That seemed to be the main thing on parents' minds in judging a teacher's effectiveness.

Discipline was not a problem in the one room school by the time I went to school. However my father had attended the same school that I did and he indicated to me that they had run out three, four or five teachers. They just couldn't control the students. You see the older boys even into their early twenties would go to school in the fall after the harvest was in. And they went mainly to harass the teacher and have a good time. The test of a good teacher was whether or not she could control them. My father told of one incident in which a school had run out several teachers. They finally brought in a strong young lady who mastered the situation. She grabbed one of the ring leaders by the scruff of the neck and threw him under the teacher's desk and told him to stay there until he had changed his attitude. He got tired of that, upset the teacher's desk, and made a bolt for the door. She picked up the hickory rod and followed him and caught up to him just outside the door. She gave him the whipping of his life. After a few such incidents like this the troublemakers dropped out and things quieted down.

There was still the testing of teachers by students in my day but not to the degree as in my father's time.

We studied history, mental arithmetic, grammar, spelling, physiology, and geography. I still have some questions we used in mental arithmetic; they are quite lengthy. The teacher would read them to a student and he would have to repeat the question to her and make an analysis of the problem and then give the answer.

In a one room school we could work at our own speed and I finished the eight grades in six years, so I was not quite twelve years old when I entered high school in 1923. One reason I went to high school was because I wasn't old enough to get a regular job. My mother encouraged me to go on because she had wanted to be a school teacher but her parents had not permitted her to go to high school because they needed her to work at home. My father would have been very happy if I had discontinued my education to work on the farm, but he did not stand in my way.

We had to pass an examination to get into high school. I still have the questions asked of me on the examination I took. I dare say that the vast majority of eighth graders today could not pass the arithmetic test and maybe the geography test that was given to me. But in fairness I would have to admit that the tests were geared to the needs of that time. For instance, you might be asked to figure out how much wallpaper would be needed to do a room of certain dimensions, or how many board feet would be cut from a saw lot of a certain size. In other words the questions were geared to people and their needs who lived in the country. A goodly number failed the test, but you could repeat the eighth grade and take the test again the next year. I recall one fellow who took the test the year I did. He was on his third round of taking the test and he failed again. There was no automatic promotion in those days.

Our high school had 60 students, two teachers in two rooms, and had been built at a cost of \$10,000. My father was on the school board at the time it was built and he thought the sum of money was an exorbitant amount to pay for a school. The building is still used as an elementary school in the Slippery Rock District. Previous to the building of the new high school an Odd Fellows hall had been used with a curtain down the middle to separate the two classes. Now the Slippery Rock Middle School has the open classroom system with four teachers teaching in the same open area. We were ahead of our time in my day because we had the open classroom too, way back then.

In high school we studied Latin, literature and science. We had a small chemistry and physics lab too, purchased with money raised with a bazaar. The strength of our high school was that our teachers knew us intimately because there were so few of us. They were also better prepared teachers since they had college degrees. They adhered to rigid standards of excellence. And there were no problems like are faced today; there was no need for lockers and I can't recall a single instance of thievery in my class. We all knew each other well. I later taught high school in the 1940's and I feel that whenever you gather large numbers of students together problems will inevitably arise that we didn't have in my small high school.

When I graduated from high school my mother suggested that I write to Slippery Rock Normal school for a catalog which I did not do, so she wrote for the catalog and placed it where I would stumble over it. I got to reading it and became interested and enrolled in 1927 at age 16.

My parents rented a room for me in a private home in Slippery Rock. In those days many, many students were living in private homes there. A high percentage of the private homes in Slippery Rock were renting rooms to students in those days. I stayed on Maple street with Mr. and Mrs. Chambers for \$2.50 a week. I boarded next door in a home for a dollar a day.

I enrolled in only a two year course because that was all I would need to teach in a rural school; it was cheaper and I never thought of anything more ambitious at that time. The second year there were two other students living with Mrs. Chambers and we made arrangements with her to cook our own meals to save money. My total expenses for my first year in college came to \$400. By cooking our own meals I cut my expenses down to \$200 the second year. To accomplish this I spent nothing on myself; no newspapers, no radio or treats. I treated myself to one banana split in two years. I was not unhappy living this way because other people were in the same predicament; I don't recall a single car on campus.

We didn't have enough money for cars and raccoon coats which were all the rage then. But college was not all work; we had dances almost every evening. The president of the college and the dean of women would be there to chaperone.

We were not a commuter college in those days; most students were not from the immediate community. We had Saturday morning classes and students were strongly encouraged to stay on campus over the weekend. Thus we got to know each other very well. Incidentally, the president pressured us not to leave on weekends even to the point where he would call in a student and tell him he was going home too frequently. The president even had the time to call students in if they were observed cutting across the campus lawns instead of sticking to the sidewalks; you were allowed to stroll on the grass but not to cut a path across the grass. Dr. Eisenberg was a very stern disciplinarian and a close eye was kept on students. Students were dismissed from the school when they didn't fit in.

The thing that stands out in my mind about the physical campus in those days was the neat and orderly condition of the buildings and grounds. There wasn't as much paper to litter with in those days and the general attitude of the college seemed to be to make the college a showplace of the community.

There was a small food and drink stand used by the students and located on Main street where Normal Avenue meets it, where a pizza shop stands now. There was another place farther along Main street where students could get something to eat. These were small places and there was no student union. But students didn't have much money to spend so there wasn't much demand. If they did snack it was more likely that they would go downtown to a grocery store for food.

A great thing was made of sports then. Coach Thompson had a good reputation both in football and basketball. The games were important events;

almost the entire student body would turn out for them. There was a great deal of school spirit as far as sports were concerned.

Most of the town streets were unpaved and there was a great deal of mud. Galoshes were a necessity, especially since there were so many vacant lots in town and we used to take short cuts through them. I walked from Maple street through the vacant lot where the Education Building now stands. And you had to be wary of skunks if you walked at night. My roommate tangled with one one night.

Local businesses thrived more in Slippery Rock than they do now because people did less out of town shopping than they do now. There were two hardware stores, the present Fred Meier hardware store was the Rogers hardware store then, and Bickham's was farther up the street near the Bard store. Bard's store was a big operation at that time. It was a country store and also carried a good line of clothes and was patronized by the students. Baker's store was often referred to as the "Gimbel's of Slippery Rock" and was located on North Main street near where Brook's appliance store is today. Things were very disorderly at Baker's. You ferreted your way through narrow, poorly lit aisles. But he had almost everything you might want. Where the Boron gas station now stands on the corner there was a restaurant. There was a big frame house or building on the northeast corner of Main and New Castle streets, but I don't remember what was in it. The restaurant located next to the Falcon station on Main street was a restaurant and bus station then. It was known as Tuckley's. I don't know the origins of the mill stone built into the side of that restaurant.

The town telephone exchange was located on the west side of Main street near Cooper street. Mrs. Dickey was the "central" or operator there for many years. Practically everyone in town had electricity by then and it was a great treat for me since we didn't have electricity on the farm; our farm wasn't electrified until the Rural Electrification Administration, a New Deal program, enabled us to have it. I didn't know anyone in Slippery Rock who had a radio but there may have been some. The first radio program I heard was the inaugural address of President Coolidge in 1924. A gentlemen who owned a radio lent it to the high school so that we could hear the address. That program was historic because it was broadcast nationwide and received wide publicity. Another historic program I was part of was the first televised inaugural address in 1952 when I was a high school teacher at Slippery Rock. All the students were assembled in the auditorium to watch it.

The only paved streets in town were Main and New Castle. Main street was paved all the way to Butler and New Castle street was paved to New Castle.

When I finished my two year course I had no difficulty getting a job teaching in the one room school where I had gone to school. I had no difficulty because my two year certificate made mine the best credentials in the school district. My only problem was that I was not yet the legal age to teach; I was not 18 until October 23, 1929. So the school board used a substitute through September so that I could teach that semester. I had to get the approval of certain officials to get this arrangement and I vividly recall having to walk many miles to interview them and to explain my story. In one case I had to walk seven miles in my galoshes over country roads to reach one school director who was working at his chicken farm. I followed him around through the chicken coop explaining my case.

I returned to Slippery Rock Normal School in 1943 to teach. By this time the New Deal had provided funds so that the school had built the Old Maltby Library, the McKay Education Building, and North and South Halls dormitories. Enrollment had not increased accordingly and I think the new buildings were erected because the money was available. There were about 1000 students when I was an undergraduate and I don't think that figure was surpassed until after World War II. Mrs. Emma Guffey Miller was influential in Democratic politics and I think she was instrumental in getting funds to put up the new buildings. After the war the college began a gradual expansion that continues to this day. I would say that the biggest changes since my day are the tremendously increased size of the campus and the greatly enlarged course offerings.

VERA GALLEGHER - 1896

I was born in 1896 in Fairview, Mercer County, near Fredonia. My grandparents were Irish and came to this country in the 1850's. My mother died in childbirth when I was two years old. She hemorrhaged. The doctor was sent for but it was too late; we lived in the country. My father couldn't take care of me so I lived with my aunt in Butler County, about three miles from Slippery Rock near Branchton.

My aunt's two daughters graduated from Slippery Rock Normal School. Teaching was about the only way a woman could get a good job then. I didn't go because there wasn't any money for me to go.

Bard's was the most popular store in Slippery Rock then. They had a wide selection of goods and if you didn't have cash you would butcher an animal or something like that and Bard's would accept it in place of cash.

When I was growing up I remember that my girl friend's parents and other neighbors held dances in their houses. They would roll back the rugs when some musicians were available on a Thursday or Friday night. There was usually a violin, sometimes a whole band of two or three. There always was something to eat, usually pie, with coffee or maybe nothing to drink. Sometimes girls met boys at these dances.

Weddings were big events too. I remember when a neighbor girl got married. They were German people. The wedding was held before noon in the church at Forrestville.

I went to high school in Slippery Rock and a few years later I decided to go to nurse's training. I had always wanted to be a nurse. I went to a Pittsburgh hospital for training. I just got on the train at Branchton; it was an easy trip. It was good training for poor people because it cost almost nothing. We got free room and board and tuition was almost nothing. All we had to provide was shoes and some clothing. The reason for this was that they were very short of nurses and the students worked a full week in nursing in addition to our studies. We got a day and a half off each week.

We had a few classes each week such as anatomy and English. English was taught because there were so many children of immigrants in the nursing program. They needed instruction in speaking English. They were hard workers though. I was a few years older than most of the girls because while my father was alive he wouldn't allow me to go into nurse's training; he didn't think it was a proper occupation for me. My aunt was all for it and when Father died she let me go. My father believed that I should either teach school or stay at home; that was it.

HOWARD GLENN

I was born in Blacktown in 1902. At that time it was not called Blacktown but Balm. The Methodist church there is still named the Balm Methodist Church. My father ran the grocery store in Blacktown.

One time my sister got pains in her side so bad we had to call the doctor. There was Dr. Barnes in Leesburg but we called Dr. Bashline in Grove City and he came out to the house. As soon as he saw that it was appendicitis he decided to operate right away. First he put my mother to boiling water. Then he put my sister on the kitchen table to operate and that's all I remember. She got well too.

I remember when Dr. Vogan came to Mercer to start the hospital in the 1920's. We had 14 doctors practicing within the borough then. Today we have one. They were all around the Diamond then. And the 14 of them had so many patients they were open evenings too.

In the 1920's Mercer was very excited about the stock market and everyone played the market, buying and selling stocks; this was a "stock" town. There were more taxes paid on stocks in this small town than was paid by Greenville or Sharon. There were even two "bucket Shops" in Mercer. Those were places where you could leave a stock with the price you wanted for it. If someone came in and was willing to pay that price your stock was sold. There was so much of this buying and selling in Mercer that there had to be two of these shops to accommodate everybody. Yes, when the famous stock market crash occurred in New York in October, 1929, there was a big stock crash here in Mercer too. Many Mercer people were badly hurt by it. That's when the great Depression began.

I remember Mercer's best known Civil War veteran: "Colonel" Hamilton. By the 1930's he had a long white beard. He was a kindly sort of man. You would see him in the Memorial Day parades every year.

The following is an excerpt from a hand-written memoir for her family written by

MARY STEWART GLENN

My father, Linus Stewart, was born in 1884 at Bethel, as the postal address was known, in a house which still stands in the village of Greenfield, Mercer County. A short distance away on this same Mercer-West Middlesex road was the Unity Presbyterian Church where my grandfather, Thomas Dickson Stewart, served as pastor from 1884 to 1906. The present church was built during grandfather's ministry. My father often told me that as a young boy he got to turn the first shovelful of dirt for its building. Upon graduation from Westminster College in 1905 my father taught school for a year in rural Mercer County. Then he secured a position as one of the officials of a foundry in Monongahela, Pa. In 1909 he married Lois Wightman of Pittsburgh.

My mother, Lois Wightman, was born in 1883 into a family which had pioneered in the glass industry of Pittsburgh. Her mother had been born in Pittsburgh in 1854 and told me stories of how she, as a little girl had watched through the fence an encampment of soldiers in Pittsburgh training during the Civil War. She later was educated at the Pennsylvania College for Women.

I was born in Monongahela, the second of four children. The dominant event of our early childhood was World War I. I remember watching Company A of the Pennsylvania National Guard drilling and of being at the station to see the train pull out with the soldiers, including my Uncle Dale, bound for the first part of their trip overseas. On many a Sunday afternoon later in the war we watched burials of returned bodies of soldiers in the Monongahela cemetery. The horsedrawn caskets, all flag-draped, were drawn through the streets to the cemetery where I can still hear the trumpets sounding taps by a tree high on the hill. How well I recall the Armistice of November 11, 1918. I recall the blowing of the factory whistle, the ringing of the church bells, doors bursting open, people rushing out into the street and the cries of "The war is over !" Particularly I see a lady with a long apron tied at the waist, rushing out and throwing her apron over her head in her glee. She was a lady whose sons were overseas.

After the war there was much labor strife. During a strike a near neighbor lost the sight of one eye when strikers shot a street car full of strike-breakers on their way to work. That night the neighbor's home was set afire. Mother was taking care of my sister who was sick. She observed the fire pouring out the neighbor's kitchen window. Dad was awakened and called the fire department before rushing out to help. About the same time another neighbor farther down the street had spotted the fire and fired a shot from his gun to alert the neighborhood. This was before the day of fire trucks. Volunteer men responded with hose carts pulled by the men themselves. We children watched in suspense as neighbor's children were dropped from the second floor to firemen's waiting arms below.

During the early 1920's we would frequently hear a significant "BOOM" after dark.

We would rush to the windows where we could see a giant cross burning far away on the hillside across the Monongahela River. The explosion was part of the initiation rites which signified another member or members being added to the Ku Klux Klan. We watched with a certain awe, whispering about rumors of who belonged to the organization. Rumor had it that many prominent Belle Vernon (where we lived) men were members.

One Sunday a body of masked and white-robed Klansmen filed into the front pews of our Presbyterian church. I recall staring at the figures wondering who was behind each mask.

When my father bought his first car, a Model T Ford, one of our first trips as a family was to Ford City to visit relatives. No driver's license was required; Dad just stepped into the car and drove off the day the car arrived. Our Ford City trip was his first experience with rain and mud. Out we whipped the side curtains to protect ourselves from the rain. I don't believe we met a single other car on the way. I do remember Dad telling us that the car was "slipping around some and that we might just accidentally slip over the hillside." I think that was a signal for the four little ones in the back seat to quit moving around. I do recall that afterwards I sat very still. I thought I was living very dangerously when I waved out the side to some boy along the road!

One time Dad took us to the Jersey Shore. The bathing suits we wore were beauties! They were navy blue of a sort of serge-like material, trimmed in white braid, with below the knee, long flowing skirts! With these we wore black cotton hosiery fitted up under the bloomer part and high laced canvas shoes! It was a wonder we weren't waterlogged and dragged to the bottom of the sea. We surely needed those ropes on which to hang.

Our visits to the summertime tent Chautauqua which came annually to Monongahela helped to give me a love of literature. There was always a story hour for children. One story only has remained with me all these years. It must have been the sound of the storyteller's voice that I recall so well. I can still hear her say, "And Rumpelstiltskin is my name!"

Uncle Bert Hertzog had the first radio we ever heard. One Sunday we were all invited to the Hertzog's in Bentleyville for dinner. There we listened to our first radio program broadcast from KDKA in Pittsburgh. The loudspeaker had not yet been invented. We listened to the program with headphones which we shared as there were not enough head sets for all to listen at once. I remember my awe at hearing the voices and music come out of nowhere, but I do not recall one single thing of what the program was about. Our very first radio was a homemade one constructed by my father. This set, too, required headphones. I recall the coils of copper wire that Dad used--it worked!

The company Dad worked for completely reorganized and he lost his job. He decided to return to Mercer County, his birthplace. He purchased what was known as the McCandless Farm of 65 acres, just off Route 19 and two and a half miles from the town of Mercer. It was the last of August, 1925, just three days before my sister Lois and I were to enter high school.

What a strange and different life to which we had come. It was so quiet and dark. A Delco System generator furnished our electricity. At times it played out and we used oil lamps. To begin with we had no inside plumbing. A "two-holer" privy stood at the upper end of the garden. I recall having Mother make Lois go with me because I was afraid to take that walk by myself at night.

We were all homesick in the beginning. What a courageous lady our mother was. This must have been a very stressful time in the lives of both Mother and Dad. I know it meant that they both had to work very hard for all of us.

Dad became a dairy farmer. This included the raising of the food for his dairy cows. He kept records of the milk production of each of his cows. There were no such things as vacations for either him or for Mother. We all helped with the haying and I recall spending many hours cutting potatoes for planting. The boys were a big help. Lois also learned to milk the cows. I remember crying because Dad would not let me learn. My flimsy wrists just did not give me enough of a grip to produce any results!

Dad had used up his savings in paying cash for the farm. Our only source of income was from the daily sale of the milk and a few eggs from the chickens we kept.

With the farm we inherited our first dog--a beautiful collie named "Bob." How we all loved "Bob". He met with disaster shortly after our first few months on the farm. Neighbors had been having trouble with dogs running their sheep. One night "Bob" was running loose and a neighbor shot him. He was able to run home to the back porch where he flopped and died. What a sorrowful morning! Later we were to have another collie, "Trixie," who remained with us for years.

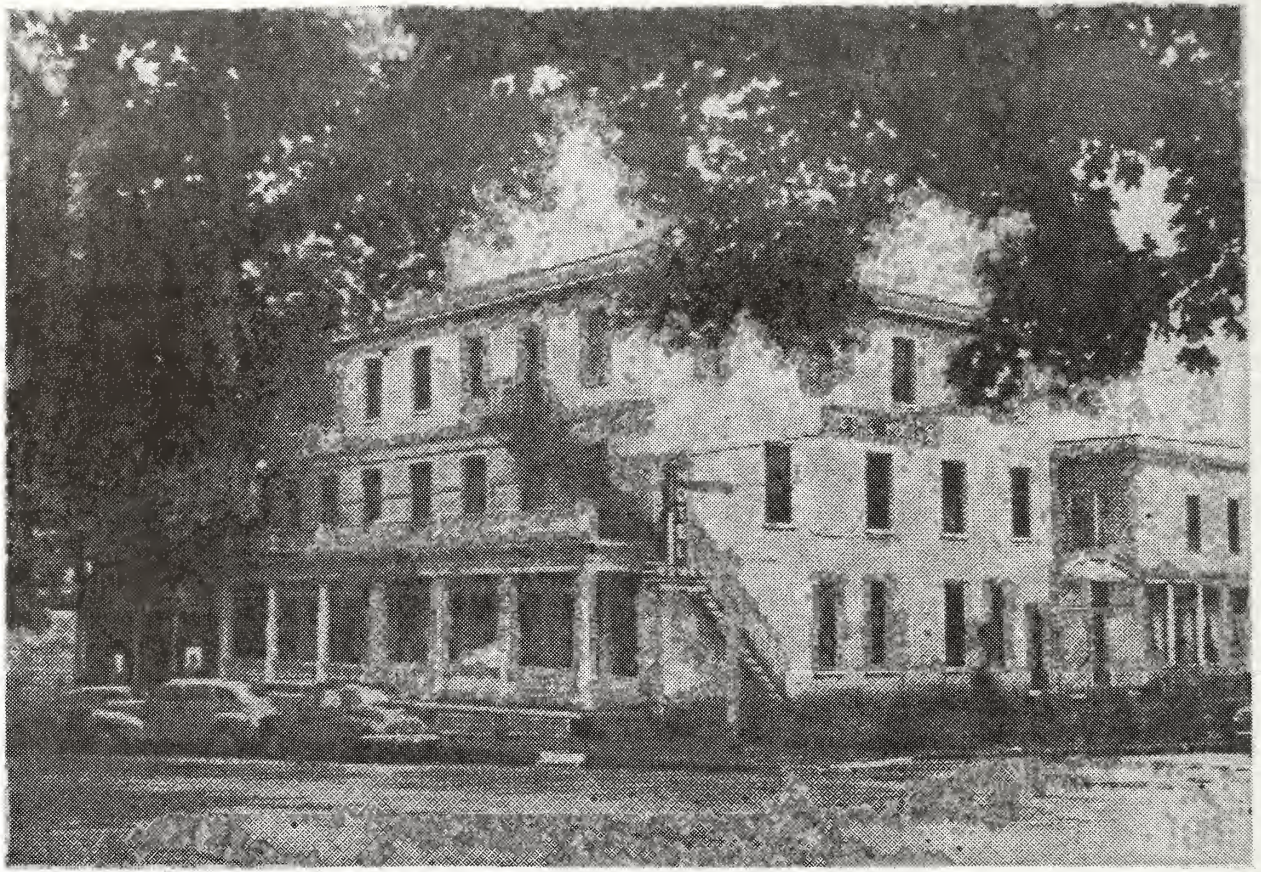
Another pet with which we were delighted was "Old Bill". "Old Bill" had been retired to the farm from Boggs and Euhl department store in Pittsburgh where for years he had faithfully pulled their delivery wagons. We had a two-wheeled cart in which we rode, driving "Old Bill" all around the countryside. In fact "Old Bill" pulled the buggy to town when the roads were too muddy for the Model T. We also had a sled for the snowy days.

Route 19, the Perry Highway, was only a dirt road until the paving began in the summer of 1929. In the spring it often became impassible, the mud was so deep. In the fall great clouds of dust settled over everything as cars rushed along.

With the paving of Route 19, it became the very busy link between Pittsburgh and Erie. Grandmother Stewart spent the summers with us, for she loved Mercer County, it, too, being the home of her youth and married life. She had her favorite rocker on our front porch. One Sunday evening I sat with her and we counted the cars across the fields that passed a certain point in one hour. In that time 5000, yes, 5,000, cars had passed, mostly headed south and back to Pittsburgh from spending a day at the lakes. Mercer became a bottleneck for it seemed to take forever to get through the town. With the modern roadways of the Interstates 79 and 80, all this is a thing of the past. A few years ago (late 1970's) a toxic waste spill on I-80 sent the traffic through town. It was bumper-to-bumper all day long.



THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, WHICH BURNED IN 1928. PICTURED IN MID-NINETEENTH CENTURY!
PHOTO: MERCER COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



HOTEL HUMES ABOUT 1948 ON THE CORNER OF THE DIAMOND AND WEST MARKET STREET WHERE
THE BORON GAS STATION NOW STANDS! PHOTO: MERCER COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



DR. VOGAN'S COTTAGE HOSPITAL!
PHOTO: MERCER COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

It was bumper-to-bumper all day long. It took me 35 minutes to drive the two miles from Howard Johnson's to Beaver street in Mercer.

A one room country school, Carpenter by name stood on Route 19 just at the end of our road. It was at this school that my brothers Dick and Wightman were entered. Lois and I were off to start our high school.

Carpenter had community box socials and plays. I had a part in one play the name of which I can't recall. The only person I can distinctly remember being in it was Fred Robinson, who played the part of my father.

When we registered at Mercer high school, the principal, Mr. Samuel Craig, did not want to admit us because we were from the country and we had not taken the county test, the passing of which admitted to you to grade 9--a high school freshman. Lois was our spokesman and I well remember her telling Mr. Craig that we had come from a school with a much higher scholastic rating than Mercer would ever have. Prof. Craig didn't want to accept our report cards which we brought along. Cautious, Mr. Craig checked with our relative, Edna Stewart, who was a junior high teacher in the building. Of course we entered our assigned classroom just after the day had started. I recall how all the kids stared at these two "country-hicks" who came into the room. I, who had always loved school, began to hate it. Upon examining our grades Mr. Craig said, "Well, there's no use trying to beat Mildred Ringer,--nobody can beat her!" I am glad that we don't have to live that first year in Mercer high school over again! As a twelve-year old thrown in with all older kids, it was hard for me to take. Today, I can laugh about much of it but at the time it was all too, too serious. Fifty years later, one has a different perspective.

We all joined the First Presbyterian Church, a red brick church by the cemetery on North Erie street. There Dr. John S. Duncan, who had been a friend of our Grandfather Stewart's, was the minister. We received a good welcome from him. This beautiful church burned down on New Year's Day, 1928. For some time we held our services in the little historical Episcopal Church which was then on North Erie street. It has since been moved to the Mercer County Historical site on South Pitt street. Dr. Duncan was about to retire. We then joined forces with the Second Presbyterian Church on East Market street which is now known as Trinity United Presbyterian. Lois and I remain members.

We had all been to Sunday school and church the day the First Presbyterian Church burned. It was January 1, 1928. A raw west wind was blowing. About 3:30 P.M. smoke was notice pouring from the church. Firemen fought valiantly to save the old church (organized in 1804). The below zero temperature hampered their efforts. The old bell dropped in and the roof caved in. All that was saved were two pianos. Many records were lost. Even though this had been our home church for just a few years, we all felt sad.

It was about this time period (although I have no record of the exact date), that Westminster College had a disastrous fire. Old Main was burned to the ground. I can recall Dad telling us this with tears in his eyes, for Old Main meant much to him.

Perhaps I should relate a story about my brother Tommy while we were attending the little historic church. On the way home from the service, Tommy told Mother that the preacher had looked right at him that day and swore. Mother asked what Dr. Duncan had said. Tommy's reply was, "Jesus Christ"! Our Mother was shocked and wondered into what kind of community we had come that Tommy had heard that kind of language. How different the times!

It was when I was a high school freshman that I heard my first profanity--and from a woman no less! Lois and I often ate our lunch at Charlie White's restaurant on North Diamond street. There the hot roast beef and hot pork sandwiches were a gastronomic delight. We came out of the restaurant to cross the court house lawn back to school. Helen Ruth, the granddaughter from the Hotel Humes, was crossing the lawn with her poodle. Helen Ruth was a young woman, dressed in furs, by reputation quite notorious for the times. Some high school boys nearby began to throw snowballs at her dog. Such a flood of profanity came from her as she gave those boys a cussing they would long remember. Helen Ruth would have made a wonderful character in a modern movie. I merely tell this story to illustrate how protected and naive we all were.

Getting to school was no problem for Dick and Tommy. The short walk from the house to the end of the road found them at the carpenter school door.

Reaching Mercer high school on East Butler street in Mercer was a different problem. In the 1920's many young people dropped out of school after completing grade eight. Individual families were responsible for providing transportation both to the neighborhood schools and to high school, if there were children in the family. The law permitted a child to leave school if he had completed grade six. In farming communities this was not uncommon as the help was badly needed on the small farms.

Through the four years of high school Lois and I traveled many different ways. Dad often drove us to school by car, by buggy, or by sled, depending upon the weather and road conditions. Upon rare occasions, weather permitting, we were known to walk home. In fact when cousins were visiting us, we sometimes walked to Mercer via Route 19 and back home by the New Wilmington road just for the fun of it and to see how long it would take us (every bit as healthy as jogging of the 1980's).

For several years Stephen Lukacs drove what was known as the school bus. This was financed by the families whose children used the transportation. The bus was a big old touring car, open sided, the make of which I cannot recall. An ordinary wooden bench was fitted into the car between the front and back seats. This enabled the car to carry eight students besides the driver. We walked to the Carpenter school to meet the bus. Some boys from the pump station rode this bus along with Gaylord and Avis Armstrong. There were a few others that I don't recall.

Two incidents with the old, old touring car come to mind. One day when coming down the Swickard Hill on the way home, I was on the bench leaning on the right hand door. The door flew open! Head and shoulders went out the door. Only the boy sitting next to me who grabbed my legs and held on kept me from hitting the road until the car could be stopped and I was pulled back inside. Everyone was yelling at Steve to stop!

One day in loading at the school yard on East Butler street I was a little slow in getting off the running board and into the car. Steve started the car moving! I clung to the emblem on the hood as I leaned against the front fender and hung on for dear-life. Scared is not the word for how I felt. Petrified is more like it. I kept yelling and thinking Steve would stop the car. He didn't! At one point the engine grew so hot, I thought I'd have to let go. How I recall the wind whipping through my hair as we sped along. I managed to hang on until the car arrived at our stop. The other kids and Steve thought it was so funny. All I could hear was laughter. Imagine any school bus driver doing such a thing today. I expect I was a very aggravating kid who was unwilling to leave some friends on the school grounds. I suppose I was being taught a lesson. My memory of it is that neither Lois nor I talked about it at home. Poor Steve--if our father had found out!

When Lois became 16 she got a driver's license and from then on we often used our own Model T for transportation to school. I belonged to the Junior Music Club and also began piano lessons with Mrs. Richard Huskin, who taught piano in her sister, Mrs. Harry Sarver's, home on Maple street. Lois often drove me to these meetings. In the summer I sometimes rode the bike while we still had it. My music was carried in a leather roll which slipped over the handle bars. One day in coming down the Swickard Hill, the music came out of the roll and dropped to the road. The brakes had gone bad and I could not get stopped until I reached the little bridge at the stream. I had to walk all the way back to rescue my music.

At least once during a big winter snow storm we went to Mercer by train! Dad took us in the sleigh pulled by our big grey team of horses to the train flag stop at Hope Mills, right in front of the Junkin farm barn. There we flagged the milk train, boarded, and rode to the depot at the foot of East Market street.

It was also to Aunt Margaret's that Lois and I went in the spring when the roads became impassible.

Aunt Margaret was growing older and as Dad did not want to impose upon her, the second year of our high school he rented a room for us at Miss Ida and Miss Amy Kemm's on North Shenango street. Miss Ida was a former teacher on Dad's then employed as the person in charge of the Mercer Free Library for which she was paid the huge sum of \$30 per month. I heard Dad say, "My little girls will be safe with her!" I do remember the wonderful bread Miss Amy baked, for they prepared our evening meal for us. Our lunches we ate at White's Restaurant; this was long before the day of school-furnished lunches.

Another spring season--the season of mud, mud, mud--we had a rented room at Zahniser's on East Butler street. There Mrs. Zahniser furnished our evening meal.

It must have been a quiet place at the farm with only Dick and Tommy at home during the weeks their two talkative sisters spent in town. In fact, Mother told me one time that the boys never talked about anything that happened at school, while we girls would start talking the minute we came through the door and never stop till we fell asleep. At last the spring mud would dry up and we would be back home again.

Lois and I always shared a bedroom. The morning of March 17, 1928, I shall always remember. The night before, March 16, her birthday, she had a date with an older boy, the son of our near neighbor, Merle Robinson. As she wakened me that morning she showed me her birthday present from Merle-- a beautiful diamond ring. I remember saying to her, "Let me out of here before Mother comes to waken us and sees that!" I didn't want to hear what Mother would have to say to her young 16-year-old daughter who thought she was old enough to be thinking of marriage.

Lois was so excited when she proudly displayed her beautiful diamond ring to her junior classmates at school that day. She promised Mother and Dad that she would be sure to finish high school before she married.

True to her promise she finished high school as an honor student and as one of the class commencement speakers. Two weeks after our graduation from Mercer high school, Lois and Merle were married on June 26, 1929, at the Presbyterian Manse on East Butler street.

To my surprise Frances, Merle's sister, called me and told me the date and time that the event was to take place. She suggested that I get ready and she would pick me up and we would go as the uninvited guests to witness the ceremony. We arrived at the Manse ahead of the bride-and-groom-to-be and were hidden by Dr. Mason, the minister, and his wife. As Lois and Merle stood before the fireplace for the ceremony, Frances and I slipped into the background and stood behind them. Imagine their surprise when it was over to find that there had been two witnesses!

Having arrived at the farm at the age of 14, Lois was now married after four years at the age of 18. She and Merle began their married life in a one story home on Route 19. The house had been built on property that had once been a part of our farm. The house was later to be the O.D. Anderson home where the Anderson bus company was started. The house had to be moved with the building of I-80.

While our home was in Monongahela and Belle Vernon it was customary to spend Christmas Day at our Wightman grandparents, along with our aunts, uncles, and cousins. A few of the sterling silver teaspoons that are mine were given to us at these Christmas gatherings by our aunts. It was their habit to give us one of these spoons each year to start us on a set of sterling in preparation for establishing our own homes. The spoons included our monogram. The custom was soon given up, for eventually there were 12 girl cousins in the family. Just think what an expense this would be with the price of silver in the 1980's.

Our first Christmas on the farm we were all dinner guests at Aunt Margaret's. Her son, Charlie, and his family from Slippery Rock were also guests.

There were gifts for all of us. I still have a tiny gold Ever-sharp pencil that Stella gave me over 50 years ago. When it was first given to me. I wore it on a grograin, a long black ribbon around my neck. I must have treasured that little gold pencil, for how it has survived these many years I do not know.

After a hard day's work on the farm, our Dad became our tutor. Many evenings were spent with him around the dining room table working on home work. He loved helping us with all our school work, particularly math. Early in our school life he had purchased the set of The Book of Knowledge for us and I think through the years that I read every page of every volume. I loved the stories in them.

Each of the four of us were much involved with our school work. I do not recall that much home work was necessary for Dick and Tom while they attended the Carpenter school. With all eight grades in one room, there was plenty of time for lessons to be prepared at school. Finally the rural school closed and the boys came to the Mercer schools. It was in grade eight that Dick and Tom came again into a graded school system. By the time they were in high school I was away at college so knew little of their high school days except for comments in Mother's weekly letters to me. In my college days the mail was pushed under the door of your dorm room. I well remember how I looked forward to seeing that letter from Mother come sliding under the door.

I do recall that sometime during the boys' school life in Mercer that they had scarlet fever and our home was under quarantine. Since I was in college and Lois was already married, our freedom was not curtailed.

In an attempt to recall some of the affairs of the years 1925 to 1929, I have visited the Magoffin Museum on South Pitt street, Mercer and read the old issues of the local paper of that day, the Mercer Dispatch. It has helped to fix some events in their proper time.

One of the early Mercerites who called at the farm was a Joe Buntman, the local junk man. His ad in a paper of August, 1925, said, "Will pay a fair price for iron and 2¢ a pound for rags delivered at the junk yard in the East End, Mercer. He came regularly to the farm in those early days in search of discards. I can recall Mother hunting rags to sell to him. Every nickle counted in those pre-Depression days. That same fall an interesting ad for Langdon's department store tells something of prices. The ad stated:

Attractive new fall styles in dresses for the High School miss priced at \$2.98 and \$3.95. A very practical dress for the girl going to school, of heavy cotton suiting in shades of blue, tan, and green. Made with long sleeves. Sizes 16 to 42.

The high school girl of that day must have been a little on the plump side. Imagine offering those sizes to the girls of the 1980's! Or is it the sizes that have changed.

Fall suits for men and boys were advertised at \$18.50 to \$45, at the Hefling men's clothing store--for many years a going concern on the Mercer Diamond.

During our freshman year of high school this store went out of business. Derby hats were sold for 5¢ and 10¢ and the boys of our class all turned up in a derby! What a class!

An ad for the Grand Union grocery chain store (now called Value King in 1983) in the Dispatch of October 9, 1925, identified the store at 120 North Pittsburgh street. (Now shortened to Pitt street) as the store "where Mercer buys its groceries." Tom worked at this store for a time after his graduation from high school and before his enlisting in the United States Marine Corps. Later this store was moved to North Diamond street and for some time Dick worked there as a stock boy while helping Dad to operate the dairy farm.

Some prices in the 1925 ad may be of some interest of comparison today. It follows:

Pure Cane Sugar--25 lbs. -----	\$1.55
Nuco Nut Oleomargerine--lb.-----	.30
Del Monte Pineapple--No. 2 can-----	.21
Pure Tomato Catsup--large bottle-----	.23
Seeded or Seedless Raisins--2 pks.-----	.25
Salad Dressing--large bottle-----	.35
Table Salt--5 pound bags-----	.10
Dill Pickles--per dozen-----	.40
Pocono Peanut Butter--10 oz. jar-----	.22
Pimento Loaf Cheese--pound-----	.45
Pork & Beans--3 can -----	.29
Sani-Flush--can-----	.24
Lemon Ginger Snaps--package-----	.05

During Dick's and Tom's high school days, I was gone from home attending Slippery Rock State Teachers College--September 1929 to May 1933. I lived those four years in a dormitory known as South Hall. Slippery Rock high school played football on the college athletic school field. I can recall attending the high school games to watch Dick play a football game. This game was the only time I saw him play.

As the class in which Lois and I were enrolled in Mercer high school was small, it was customary to have class parties at the homes of some of the members. I can recall attending five such parties. The homes were all country homes with the exception of one which was at the home of a class member's mother who lived in Greenville. Others were at Lulu Armstrong's near Leesburg Station, Luke McCullough's on the Clarksville road, Mildred McWhirter's on the Sharon-Mercer road and Lois and I entertained at an April Fool's party. This is the newspaper quote about that party of Friday, April 1, 1927: "The Sophomore Class was entertained at the home of Lois and Mary Stewart. Games and music were the diversions of the evening." We had a player piano with many rolls of good music which was quite a novelty for many of the class. "Delightful refreshments were served by the hostesses." I can't recall what was served. "A good time was enjoyed."

On January 7, 1927, our class enjoyed a sled ride to Grove City. The huge sled, like a wagon on runners with lots of straw on the floor, was pulled to Grove City over the Mercer-Grove City road.

We left Mercer at 6:00 P.M. and attended a movie in Grove City. We also stopped to eat somewhere. The name of the movie and where we ate, I do not recall. This sled party was chaperoned by two of our young teachers, Marian Whieldon of Mercer, and Eleanor Gamble of Sharon. We all snuggled up on the floor of the sled to keep warm and I remember how we sang songs and laughed all the way.

Two boys in our high school class were killed. A Pyle boy was killed in a hunting accident when we were freshmen and Thomas Urey, Jr. was killed by a tree he was helping his father to cut down. As a class we attended his funeral at his home. We were all packed into an upstairs bedroom for the service. Funeral homes were a later development.

Another item taken from the newspaper read: "Mary Stewart attended a luncheon given by Clara May McLaughrey at the home on W. Market street on Saturday, Feb, 12, 1927." Clara May was the daughter of our Mercer County Judge. Her older sister Mary became our high school music teacher and I was the accompanist for the Mercer high school orchestra under her direction.

The Dispatch of March 11, 1927, carried this item: "Mary Stewart, a member of the Soph. A. class wrote an essay on the subject 'How Abstinence from Alcoholic Liquors By the Individual Benefits the Community' and won a prize of \$3.00 given by the W.C.T.U." This essay I had to read before the W.C.T.U. at their meeting in the United Presbyterian Church (Bethany) on Venango street.

A year later I wrote and won another essay contest on "The Benefits to Labor Through Prohibition" where the prize had been up'd to \$5.00! I recall that Junior Rodawalt, a classmate, won the contest for the boys. Junior and I were good friends and in later years rode horseback together on his two beautiful riding horses. For several years after his graduation from Grove City College, he worked for the Sun Oil Company in Toledo. Early in his twenties, Junior died of a strep throat and heart condition. I well recall my last visit with him on his death bed, for I was stopping by the Mercer Free Library and bringing him books to read. His older brother, John, also worked for Sun Oil in Clarksburg, West Virginia. As neither ever owned a car, my husband Howard and I would sometimes take them to Mahoningtown, south of New Castle, to catch a late Sunday train back to their respective cities.

While Lois and I were in high school Friday was early dismissal day. Each Friday afternoon was known as Literary Day. Much of the following information as to time, place, and event is verified in the Mercer Dispatch. This newspaper carried a weekly column for each of the high school classes. Each week we were required to participate in some different literary event. From these programs some one person was selected to represent the school in a particular event. Each school drew the name of another high school from the then 13 high schools in the county and a contest was held between the two. In the spring of the year the winner of the contest represented his school in the County Round-Up which was held at one of the larger high schools. There was a county winner selected.

One of the best literary programs of the year 1928 announced that Lois Stewart had participated in the debate--"Resolved: An income tax is a desirable scheme of taxation." Lois represented the affirmative. At this program Mary Stewart played a piano solo! I do not recall what piece I played but do know that it was some classical piece, for I was studying Chopin at the time. I have always regretted that college interrupted my piano studies.

Lois went on to represent the school in oration. I became extemporaneous speaker. At one point I recall having over 30 current topics that I could give ten minute talks on without benefit notes.

At the county round-up I also represented the school in Letter Writing along with Mary Bell Duncan, our minister's daughter.

Since we had no auditorium at that time our stage events took place at the Liberty Theater (Now the McDowell Bank location). On April 13, 1928, I took part in an operetta "The Rivals" on that stage. I must have been part of the scenery for I never could sing!

Our graduation also took place on the stage of the Liberty Theater. There on the night of June 12, 1929, Lois was a commencement speaker delivering an oration entitled, "The Maintenance of Peace." Dorothy Ely, a freshman, played the violin at this commencement. The girls all dressed in the evening dresses at that time. My commencement dress was pink chiffon. That same dress carried me through the formal events of my college freshman year. Lois dressed in white satin. Our class 1929 presented as a parting gift the first painting for the new and first school auditorium in the East street addition. The picture was Raphael's "Dream of Paradise". There were 29 seniors who received their diplomas. There were only six honor students for the four years of high school. Our senior year the Honor Roll was published on the front page of the Dispatch for Nov. 23, 1928. The two Stewart girls names' both appeared as two of the five names of seniors.

Our senior play was untitled "Romance Hunters". I tried out and was given the lead part by our dramatic teacher Miss Mary Orr of Greenville. The Dispatch of January 11, 1928, announced the cast and also noted that Lois had been given the part of Liza. I knew that Lois had not practiced for the play and asked her why. She explained that she did not like the boy she was to play opposite and she absolutely refused to be in the play. What great fun she missed. But you must remember that this was only a few months before her marriage and she had no eyes for anyone but Merle--even play acting!

A June event of each summer was the Garden Party held on the court house lawn. All the young girls served as aids in some capacity to earn money for the Children's Home on West Market street, Mercer. I always took part. Twice I sold nosegays, circulating around the court house yard with the nosegays in a wicker basket over my arm. This was very stylish event which the whole town supported. I remember two different outfits I wore for the party. A sheer black dress with pleated skirt, black patent leather belt and shoes, dark hose, topped by a huge rimmed black taffeta hat and white gloves; it must have made my tall frame, 104-pound figure look like a toothpick. Another year I was in an all white silk sport dress with a navy and white poke-a-dot scarf and belt. With this was worn navy silk hose and navy and white shoes.

Mother's life was devoted to her family and church. She was an avid church-goer and a worker in her missionary society. Her only other outside activity was a monthly neighborhood club. Neighbor women from the near-by homes met once a month for lunch at one of the homes where families and events were discussed. Sometimes some sort of embroidery, knitting or needlework passed the afternoon.

After lunch or dinner Mother would sit at her place at the table, her head would nod and she would sleep soundly for ten minutes or so and then waken and begin her housework. Ironing, cooking, cleaning, helping with farm chores, I never heard her complain.

Each year huge meals had to be prepared for silo fillers or threshers. The boys helped outside and Lois and I served the table. The ten or twelve neighbor men helped washed up outside on a bench where hot water, towels, and soap were furnished. The men always looked forward to Mother's good cooking. Some sort of pie was the standard dessert. In exchange for the help of these men Dad would then help at their farms through the threshing and silo filling time. As the boys grew older sometimes they also went to neighboring farms to help.

During the Great Depression Dad helped at other jobs to bring in a little more. Roads were built and I can remember Dad and his great, grey team of horses hauling stone for some of the WPA projects.

When the Soil Conservation Project was started Dad was a worker in the program. I recall the huge aerial maps he used. The main office was in Mercer. Recently, one of the then young women who had worked in that office told me how she always tried to be the one to go over Dad's material when he came in. She said, 'No other worker was as well organized, as neat, and as kind as my Dad.'

Mother taught us to sew. Many of our summer dresses were made by us. During the Depression we bought chicken sacks with feed in them that were of a patterned material. When empty these sacks were thoroughly washed and made into clothing. One such outfit I recall even going to college with me, where everyone wanted to borrow it. All dorm girls borrowed each others clothing! This was a summer cotton of orchid and white print made into a simple sleeveless dress with shorts to match.

In my sophomore year in high school I started a quilt. This quilt had remnants of many dresses in it. You could recall events by certain rows. It was an "around-the-world" pattern, starting with two-inch pieces in the center, next row, four, etc., until it contained over 3000 patches. To this was added a border of about six inches of blue material. For this border our Grandmother Stewart made me a pattern called a feather pattern to be quilted on the plain material. Several years were devoted to cutting the patches. These were stored in a large suit box and the color scheme laid out in the box. I did not want to miss using any group already cut. Finally, quilting frames were set up in one end of the dining room and with some little bit of help from Grandmother Stewart on her summer visits, I quilted the whole project. It was my pride and joy. Into my hope chest it went. It's first use was at my married home on North street, Mercer.

After about five years of my marriage, I went to my brother Tom's in Chicago for a visit. In the mean time my husband Howard had acquired his dog Gizmo. While I was away, Gizmo entertained himself by tearing up the quilt! I put it aside thinking that some day I would try to repair all the damaged patches. There it met its fate by fire! Thus my 13 years of endeavor to create a family heirloom went up in smoke! Material things are here today and gone tomorrow, leaving us only with memories.

All my male relatives loved to hunt. In fact it might be of some interest to here relate an anecdote of one of the Stewart ancestors as written by our father's Uncle Arthur. He tells of how each generation has produced a great hunter. One Thomas Stewart, the son of Charles and Fannie Stewart, their ninth child, born on January 20, 1801, according to Uncle Arthur would "On different occasions go hunting for days at a time." The story goes on to relate:

"His fondness for hunting made him the renowned hunter of the community. Old Plumper, the rifle which his father had made for him by his father, was given to Thomas when he was but a boy, and with it he did his hunting. Deer, turkey, squirrels, pheasants, quail, and a few bear could be found. Western Pennsylvania and Eastern Ohio were densely wooded and formed a natural habitat for all game birds and animals."

Thomas was a large man, over six feet and weighing over two hundred pounds. He often shot at the mark with the Indians as they passed through the country and was known by them as 'the white man who could shoot straight'. His best record in any one hunting season was eighteen deer and seventy-two turkeys to say nothing of the many squirrels and pheasant he shot.

Another story will attest to his marksmanship. "On one hunt for squirrels, he started out in the morning with one hundred bullets for his gun. He returned in late afternoon with ninety-nine squirrel tails, having missed only one shot out of the hundred, and when we remember, that every squirrel had to be shot through the head, the evidence of his marksmanship is plain."

In September of 1929, while I was yet 16 years old, I enrolled in Slippery Rock State Teachers College where for the next four years I lived in the dormitory South Hall. There I completed the requirements for a B.S. degree in education.

I graduated from S.R.S.T.C. qualified to teach in secondary school. This was during the Depression and no jobs were to be found. I literally tramped the streets looking for a secondary position. Meanwhile, I tutored two Mercer boys so that they could keep up with their class. In fact there were three such students I had. A Carter boy, whose mother was a former Mercerite, came to Mercer from McKeesport to spend the summer. He had been a victim of polio and had missed a term of school. I worked with him when he came to the farm for each day's session. Jim Palmer had undulant fever when in eighth grade. His father was our mailman, and he brought him to the farm each day for his lessons.

The other boy was David Barton, whose father had been a Mercer boy and who had come for a time to live with his Mercer grandparents. His father, a Colonel in the Army and a West Point Graduate, had been stationed in the Phillipines. Enroute home (before much air travel) David had missed a great deal of school. I worked with him so that he could enter high school.

In order to keep busy I helped in the Mercer Free Library. The elderly Librarian, Miss Kemm, with whom we had lived while in high school, became ill and for three months I operated the library for her.

With the promise that I could teach at the Dilley rural school (all eight grades), I borrowed the money and returned to S.R.S.T.C. for a term and a summer where I certified for elementary teaching. While teaching, I made my home with Dad and Mother at the farm. The first two years I had no car of my own so Dick often drove me to school and then he went on to finish his high school. I then taught two years at Stonepile school in East Lackawannock Township where Tommy sometimes drove me until in 1938 I purchased my first car--a beautiful (?) Chevy! My meager income of \$90 per month for an eight month term helped out at the farm. I was a part of the farm household long after Dick's marriage. In fact Dick had two children before in November of 1942, I married Howard and we moved into our apartment on North Erie street mercer.

MAPLE GOVE - 1890

My father was born in Mercer on North Pitt street and so was I. I was born in 1890. One of my ancestors was a French Protestant named Jacques who fled from France to Ireland to avoid persecution. His three sons came to America as indentured servants in the 18th century and anglicized the name to Jack. They later came to Pittsburgh. A family story says that one day while one of the Jack boys was walking down the street my great-grandmother, Mary Ann Arthur, saw him and announced, "There goes my man!" They were married about 1800 and my grandmother was born in Pittsburgh. My grandfather Jack came to Mercer in 1845 to help build the Mercer Academy on Erie street. He bought this house on North Pitt street which was conveniently just behind the Academy. I have the original deed which says it was built in 1845. The house has been renovated since then. It was raised up and a foundation put under it and a fireplace was built in every room; there were no furnaces in those days.

My great-grandfather Gibson on my father's side was an officer in the Revolutionary war. There is a plaque erected in Pittsburgh honoring his memory for his deeds during that war. After that war he received a land grant from the government of over 600 acres out here in Mercer County around New Castle and New Wilmington. It has always been said that the Gibson's gave the land upon which West Middlesex is located. Grandfather William Gibson was born at Neshannock Falls between New Castle and New Wilmington.

That whole Gibson family were building contractors. When they built the first court house my grandfather had the contract to put in the windows and finished the inside of the court house. My father Gibson was born in 1859. He and his family were all painters; they had a paint factory at the lower end of Mercer.

The Old First Presbyterian Church next to the Old Cemetery burned down in 1928 and produced trouble and a big argument in Mercer. First of all, after all the years of separation it was natural with the First Presbyterians burned out of their Church for the Second Presbyterians to invite them to reunite them. Back in the Civil War the Second Presbyterians had walked out of the First Presbyterian Church over the pastor's supposed sympathy for the South. The biggest problem foreseen in this reunion was who would sit where? You see families had been sitting in one pew for so long that metal name plates had been affixed to those pews with their names on them. Christian charity prevailed and there was no trouble when they actually moved in; it was decided that the newcomers could sit where they wanted to.

But then someone in the 1940's wanted to build a gas station on the corner of Erie and Venango streets. This affronted many people for not only was beautiful, shade-tree lined Erie street being ruined by the increasing number of gas stations, but now they were invading a semi-sacred spot: the Old Cemetery and the site of the First Presbyterian Church which had come to symbolize Mercer's past history. Old members of the First Presbyterian Church insisted that their old church had owned the Old Cemetery and the entire frontage of Erie street, thus intending to preserve the Old Cemetery from gas stations.

To everyone's embarrassment when the old deed of the First Presbyterian Church was dug out, it was found that the church owned only the property under which the church had stood. It not only didn't own the frontage on Erie street, it didn't even own the Old Cemetery. It was very clear in the deed; the land was donated to the church by John and Nancy McCurdy and only enough land was donated to provide for a church. As we now know John McCurdy couldn't have given any land belonging to the Old Cemetery because there was no deed for the Old Cemetery. I suppose that there was a cemetery there when the town was laid out in 1803 and no one thought to make sure that a deed was made out to show that the Old Cemetery, (it was not the Old Cemetery in 1803, it was just the town cemetery), belonged to the town. This was not done and everyone just gradually assumed that the Old Cemetery belonged to the First Presbyterian Church. When this was discovered in 1946 or 1947, legal steps had to be taken to deed the Old Cemetery to the borough of Mercer.

Unfortunately, the reunion of the First and Second Presbyterian Churches has not been finalized to this day. The First Presbyterian Church had been the preeminent and leading church in town. Suddenly they were orphans in a strange, even a rival, church. I believe some of them still are trying to run our church.

And the bitterness over the gas station-cemetery issue is still alive with those who lived through it. Somehow to many of us it seemed that a church belonged next to the cemetery, not a gas station. Gas stations ruined the beauty of this town.

Across the Erie street from the First Presbyterian Church was the Mercer Academy which I attended for five years. That was the school that my great-grandfather had come to Mercer to help build; he was a cabinet maker. I went there in the fifth grade. There were no indoor bathrooms in those days. There was a row of privies alongside the Academy building on the North street side. Some were set aside for the faculty and some for the students. The building was made of dark red brick.

I graduated from the new high school on East Butler street in 1909. It had indoor plumbing. I got a job as a clerk in the Sharon office of U.S. Steel. I bought a car for commuting while I worked there. One day at work the man whose desk was opposite mine told me, "I'm going to sell you a car." In those days very few women drove cars and I replied that if he was, he was going to have to teach me to drive it. I had a well-paying job, \$150 a month, so I could afford a used car. I bought it and he taught me to drive in Buhl Park. I began to commute from Mercer.

I did have a good job at U.S. Steel. One time a man stopped me and told me he wanted me to come to work for him because he had heard I was good. He offered me \$85 a month. I turned him down flat. I loved my work. I had a man's job. They treated me very well. I got the job when World War I started and there was a shortage of men. I kept that job for 15 years.

It was not difficult to meet a man in Mercer. There were the schools and then the Mercer Fair. The first boy I went with I met because of the Mercer Fair. My sister and I were sitting on the porch of my father's house on the east side of North Pitt street one afternoon when four fellows came by in their car and waved to us.

We didn't know much about what to do with boys but we waved back. It was easy to see that they were from Grove City College; the college colors were red and white and these boys were wearing red ties and red shoelaces. They went on to the fair and later we went to the fair. These fellows saw us and came over and talked to us. One of them hooded onto me and asked me for a date for the next night at the roller rink. The roller rink was located on the second floor of what is today Bisset's garage.

JUNE HASSEL - 1907

I was born in 1907 a couple of miles from North Liberty in Liberty township. The grocery store on the North-west corner of the crossroads was there then and had been open for a long time when I was a girl. I think there was a second grocery in North Liberty. My father's name was Buckston and he was born up near Mercer. My mother's family lived about a mile north of Slippery Rock in Redmond. Take the North Liberty Road out of Slippery Rock until a hundred yards before Wolf Creek where you can still see an old road to the east. A quarter mile east was the coal mining village of Redmond. The Christley flour Mill was on Wolf Creek where the North Liberty Road crosses the creek. The frame house next to the stone house in the Valley there was the Christley home. I know nothing about the story that slaves were kept in the stone house before the Civil War. The Currie's woolen mill was farther up Wolf Creek where the small iron bridge is. That big home at the foot of the hill before you cross the bridge was Currie's. You can get to it by travelling east on Fergus road. They wove wollen cloth. My father later tore down the mill for the lumber. Farther up yet on Wolf Creek was the Courtney road and it takes you to Wolf Creek. When you cross Wolf Creek there was Courtney's flour mill.

I went to high school in Slippery Rock beginning in 1921. It was apparently attached to the normal school because it was a frame building called the "Model" school and was located near where West Hall is now. The student teachers did their practice teaching there. I went there during my freshman year. There were only 32 in my graduating class so we could be fitted into any building. After a year in that building we were located in Old Main. We mingled with the normal students. We had different classes but the same teachers as the college students. It seems incredible that there was the high school as well as the college all in Old Main, but there weren't that many of us and it wasn't too crowded. And we even had a gymnasium and library on the third floor. The professors seemed to adapt very well to teaching us high schoolers; we had one we all just loved: A.P. Vincent. If some boy didn't have his work prepared he would ask Mr. Vincent about World War I. The rest of that class period would be Mr. Vincent's experiences during the war. He was a wonderful man. There was no friction with the college students. I got to know a few of them at the dances. Every day at noon we would go to the gymnasium and someone would play the piano and we would dance. There was no discrimination against the high schoolers.

The teaching technique at the college wasn't the same as it is today. when it is largely lecturing. Then there was much more of the question and answer approach to teaching. We were quizzed regularly to see if we were keeping up with our homework.

One disadvantage we had was that the high school taught no music and if you had had none in your childhood you were sunk when you got to college because at the normal school you were required to take music. The Grove City high school taught music but not at Slippery Rock.

The high school did not have any official sports teams, but the boys did organize a basketball team; it was made up of some high schoolers and some town kids who did not go to school. Even an occasional normal student played on the team. They were allowed to play other towns using normal facilities and I think they called themselves the Samplers. But when the high school girls got up a team under a normal school student it was different. When they played a game they were called on the carpet by Dr. Eisenberg and you didn't do that in those days.

Aside from the dancing and sports events there wasn't much else to do for recreation, maybe to to a movie on Saturday night. The movie house was where the grange hall is now, on the alley behind Main street. I didn't go to the movie much because I lived with my grandmother in Redmond about a mile out of town; my grandparents had moved to Redmond in the 1880's. But it was not that I was afraid to be out at night; there was nothing to fear in Slippery Rock at night. When going to Redmond from Slippery Rock I would walk out the lane that passes through the new subdivision today past the Kelly house. There were actually a couple of lanes going up toward Redmond, one of them hit the light road I told you about earlier which led from the Slippery Rock-North Liberty Road. There is still a path into Redmond from Grove City Road if you know where to look. There is nothing left of my grandparent's house except the spring house. The barn burned down a few years ago. It was the strip mining that tore up the old house.

I started at Slippery Rock Normal in 1925. I went for one year so that I could teach as soon as possible. Then while I taught I came back for two summer terms. The campus buildings were Old Main, the model school, the girls' dormitory, (North Hall), the boys' dormitory, the (South Hall), the chapel, and West gym, that was all. You could go uptown until 7 P.M. and there were tea rooms there where you could meet boys. There was also a stationery store where students could buy school supplies; it was called McKissick's and was located near Uber's furniture store. One tea room I remember was almost opposite today's post office, about where the card shop is today. The earliest post office was across the street from the present post office. They moved it down to Franklin street to the building where Tinker's Dam is today. The tea room was called Heineman's and a lot of students went there. You could eat or get ice cream there. Sometimes dates came there or to the movies, but all students' lights had to be out at 10 P.M. Dances every Saturday night were the basic social occasion between boys and girls. And then there were the sports events. I went to the football games, even though I didn't know anything about football, just for the fun of it.

College girls had become more liberated by the 1920's; that's when they began to smoke cigarettes and cut their hair. I think the college girls did this before the town girls because I remember one town girl who cut her hair when she became a student at college. On the other hand town girls were free to come and go as they pleased because it was up to their parents to make their curfew, but all the college kids had to be in at a certain time.

There was no friction between townspeople and students. All students lived in dormitories or private homes and studied more and there was no noise problem. And you knew everyone in town; as I walked up to school from town I knew everyone in the stores and they would say hello to me. Now it isn't quite that way.

Dr. Eisenberg was the president. He presided over "chapel" every day for about half hour; at 11 A.M. students were required to be there. Sometimes he said a prayer, sometimes he gave a sermon. There would be music, student singing and prayer. Once a week we would have music appreciation during chapel. The staff played phonograph records of classical music and we had to become familiar with them so that we knew something about classical music. Once in a while the literary society would give a reading of some passage from a famous book. Chapel was also a time to make announcements of coming events. Sometimes a professor would give us a sermon or talk of interest to the general student population. Attendance was not taken but everyone had an assigned seat and professors sat at regular intervals so that if you weren't there they knew about it. Since chapel was only for half an hour attendance was not a problem.

There were no fraternities or sororities at Slippery Rock then, but there were literary societies. These were primarily social in spite of their title. There were two literary societies which held literary evenings including refreshments and time to talk.

There were dormitory advisors but no academic advisors. They were not needed since there were almost no elective subjects. Once you announced the program you had selected you were locked into most of the courses you would take for four years. We had to study about 2-3 hours a night to keep up with our assignments. The biggest difference from the courses of today was that our learning was exclusively academic while today's students seem to do a lot more doing and drawing and constructing. We mastered book learning only.

I don't know if there were athletic scholarships then but I know that some athletes came primarily to play their particular sport even then. One boy I remember had come to play football. In my senior year in high school we had some college students in our class because they didn't have enough credits and they were admitted on condition that they make up the high school credits they lacked. One student in that position went on to become the head of the George Junior Republic.

Most students were brought to the college in their parents' cars and a few by train to Keisters station on Route 8. A few students had cars on campus and town boys sometimes had access to cars so we could sometimes go to Grove City or Butler. I went to my parents' home above North Liberty on weekends, about 4 miles from the college. Sometimes I walked home, sometimes I would get a ride in a buggy, and in the winter my dad would come for me in the bobsled.

One incident that I remember caused a scandal. Students bringing their girlfriends home to the girls' dormitory became convinced that someone was hiding behind a tree to spy on them to see if they kissed the girls goodnight. We were assigned to write an essay soon after and one boy wrote about this and accused the music teacher of being the spy. It turned out the person behind the tree had been a student.

The music teacher was suspected because she lived in the dormitory and sort of kept an eye on the students. She was strict too and nobody liked her. We didn't have a campus policeman because there normally didn't seem to be any need for one.

There was still a hotel in Slippery Rock next to the bank in those days. Salesmen would come because there was a train from New Castle which stopped in Redmond and a train from Pittsburgh stopped at Kiesters. The Redmons-New Castle train was not full-width and had a narrow gauge.

NORMAN "SLIM" HASSEL - 1905

I was born in 1905 in Pine Township about four miles out of Grove City. My grandparents were from Germany and from Scotland: beer drinkers and whiskey drinkers. My grandfather operated small country coal mines on Chestnut Ridge. He would buy a bit of land, sink a shaft and mine the coal, and then move on to some place else. My father and I followed in his footsteps and operated coal mines.

The first thing an operator had to do was find land with coal under it, by drilling. They would take a big sappling tree and bend it over and tie the drill by a rope to the top of the sapling. There would be a place on the drill for your foot. Then you would jump up and down on the rope to let the weight of the drill drop it hard into the hole and the sapling's spring would pull it out again ready for you to jump on the rope again. They would drill down anywhere from 30 to 60 feet deep on the old homestead.

Then we would dig the shaft by hand about five or six feet square, wide enough for the 'cage' to fit into it. The cage was for letting the men down anywhere and for bringing up the coal. Then we would have a steam engine at the top of the shaft to raise and lower the cage. There would be one and sometimes two men at the top of the shaft to operate the engine. Leo Stevenson's great-great granddad sold the steam engines. I was the first patient Dr. Bashline ever had in Grove City in about 1920 or 1922 when I got my foot caught in the gears which raised the cage. His office was up above Walter's jewelry store. I had been a miner before that, though. I started when I was ten years old in 1915. I didn't mine coal when I was ten, but I would oil the pumps and tend the steam engine down the mine. If we had ponies to bring the coal out I would take care of them. Sometimes those ponies would stay underground for months. We had the steam engine down in the mine to pump out the water that we struck sometimes.

Once the shaft had been sunk down to the coal vein we would start digging coal on both sides of the shaft. We couldn't dig on all four sides for fear of causing a cave-in. Cave-ins were not uncommon. We had one mine on Chestnut Ridge which was located south of where Kimes garage is today, just in that first woods south of Kimes. It hadn't been opened up for a very long time when they hit quicksand and the ceiling came down.

There were six men in it at the time. Three men managed to get to the cage and come up. There was about three feet of sand on the roof of the cage when they came up. The other three men found refuge in the air chamber. This was a narrow shaft to the surface to supply air down into the mine. There were steps dug into the sides and they started up for the surface. But before they got very far it crumbled because there was so much sand in the soil. They were forced to climb a hot stove pipe which served the steam engine down in the mine. They burned their hands very badly. I was just a little boy at the time and was home with my mother. We heard the steam whistle blowing like crazy and we knew something was up. When the whistle didn't stop blowing my mother got very worried and we ran down there as fast as we could just as the men came out.

We hired many immigrant coal miners but immigrants over at Number 5 Mines and Number 2 Mines. The coal companies built houses for them there. We had a lot of them working for us during the First World War. They were all pretty good miners. We didn't have to teach them how to mine; they already knew how to mine; they already knew how to mine or we didn't hire them.

Then we would build a tippie about 40 feet above the ground level at the top of the shaft. The coal would then be hoisted to the top of the tippie and dumped onto screens to sort the coal into various sizes as it fell. In about 1915 my dad built the first coal shutes in this part of the country. After being sorted by the screens the coal would fall into containers with a door at the bottom. Below the door my dad built chutes so that you could drop the right size of coal right into a wagon just by pulling a lever. As soon as he built shutes he sold more coal than anyone else because if people went to other mines they had to shovel the coal into the wagon by hand. It wasn't long before everybody was using coal shutes. I still know where that mine with the first shutes was located. You go out on Route 208 towards Mercer and turn north when you come to the road that the Center Presbyterian Church is located.

We lived in a lot of places because my dad would buy two or three properties before the old coal mine was played out. If he got the chance to sell the property we were living on he would and move to one of the newly acquired properties and open another coal mine. We didn't have much trouble getting farmers to sell their land because we made more than farm land would ordinarily bring, maybe a third more. Or my dad would just lease the mineral rights on a property and pay the owner so much a month. There wasn't much competition among coal miners to acquire land with coal on it, but competition did increase later on as sites were used up. How many mines were there around here? Well, my dad's two mines, Coyer Nimmo, and a new mine uncle opened up.

My dad employed as many as 30 men. There was never a union that I remember. Sometimes the men talked about forming one but they never did. Sometimes there would be a dispute over wages or conditions with the men. Like one time the men complained that they had too far to push their coal cars from the coal face to get to the shaft; it was taking them too long. In those days it was up to the men to get the coal to the shaft and up to us to raise it out of the shaft. So we had to go and buy mules or ponies. At that time I was not yet old enough to work in the mines so when we saw an ad to sell two mine ponies I went for them. It was Humes-Grossman's down in Slippery Rock, who were selling, and I bought both of them for \$300 a piece. One of the horses was a little sorrel mare, one of the nicest sorrels you ever saw, with a white face and white feet.

When my mother got a look at that sorrel she came over and laid the law down: "That pony is not to go down in the mine! If that pony goes down in the mine you go down and stay with it." It was too good looking for mine work. So I gave it to my younger brother. The ponies were referred to as "mine ponies" because they were broke for mine work. Those two ponies had been used in the Old Redmond mine. But by that time it was no longer called Redmond but North Slippery Rock.

"Breaking a pony for mine work" meant teaching it to pull the coal cars down in the mine. And teaching meant showing the pony that he had nothing to be afraid of. We had an old fellow named Fred Shipton who was the best mule skinner I ever saw. He could take a pony that no one else could break and in two hours he would have that pony broken and working. One time in 1923 I was visiting a mine looking for a steam engine part when a mine pony was brought up the shaft; it was a strawberry roan about four feet high. It was all cut up and bleeding and kept rearing up and was very upset. I asked the mule skinner what had happened and he said, "Oh, that's an outlaw. You can't make that pony work." And he cussed and swore a blue streak. I happened to think of how good old Fred was with ponies, so I said, "What'll you take for the pony?" They were so disgusted with the pony I got her for \$15. I was driving a 1923 Studebaker so I just tied the halter rope to the back bumper and took her to our mine. When I got there my dad didn't like the looks of her; he claimed she looked like she had been in a war. Fred Shipton took that pony down in the mine and hitched her up. You would have sworn she had been pulling cars in the mine for a hundred years and we never had any trouble with her. When we closed the mine I sold the pony for \$300.

The only time we worked a night shift was during the war because there was so much local demand for coal. I hauled coal over to Grove City College way back as far as 1915. It was difficult to increase production because everything was done by hand; there was no strip mining then. The coal had to be dug out by hand and hauled by horse wagon. If you hauled three loads a day from Blacktown to Grove City you were lucky; mostly it was two trips. We hired three or four teamsters to haul coal to customers. They were paid about \$2 per day for working from 6 A.M. to about 6 P.M. That was not big pay. I remember when the township gravelled the Mercer road out to Center Church later on I had a team of horses and I hauled gravel. They only paid once a month because they only made out checks once a month, so I worked 30 days from 6 A.M. to 5:30 P.M. before I got paid. It was very disappointing to look at that check: it was for \$300. I had to pay for feed for a team of horses and that didn't leave much for me.

Everything was done by hand in the mine except the blasting; we used dynamite for that. When they were ready to blast everyone would go back to a "cubby hole" for protection; we never left the mine when blasting because that would waste too much time. The biggest job for the miner was to push his car full of coal to the shaft because sometimes the trip was uphill. And some mines did not lay railroad track for the cars to travel on; they laid 2x4's instead. These were very uneven and the cars would constantly jump the rail and the miner would have to lift the car back on. Most mines used regular T iron rails on the main path to the shaft and laid 2x4's for the short entries.

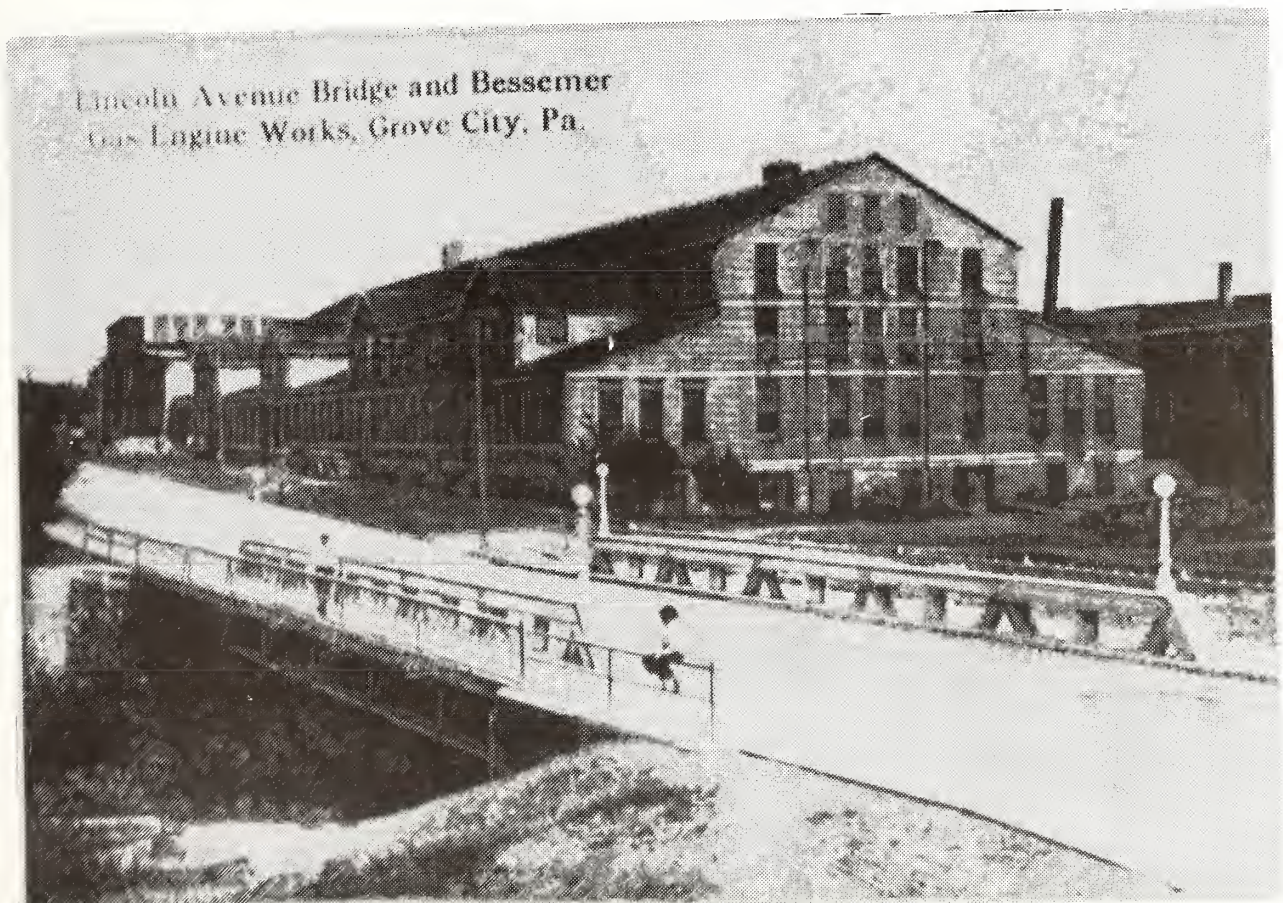
John Turner was the local coal broker in Grove City; Dad sold him a lot of coal. And we sold to the Ohio Illuminating Company in Cleveland, shipped on the Bessemer Railroad. They wouldn't mail us the money so Dad had to go to Cleveland once a month to collect it in cash. One time the cash for one month was \$1300 and I met my father at the Grove City station when he came home. He told me that he had lost the case with the \$1300 in it. We asked the railroad to look for the case but it was not found. About a month or two later I was down at the mine on Sunday alone because sometimes you had to pump water out of the mine every day 24 hours a day. And this car pulled in and the driver asked me if this was the Hassel mine. When I said it was he gave me the case that had been lost. "Is this the Fred Hassel mine?" I said, "Yep, I'm his boy." And he says, "This case belongs to your dad. It got mixed up with some stuff of ours that was coming from Cleveland and we didn't find it until now. We looked inside for an address and found the money as well as an address." I wanted to pay him a reward but he wouldn't hear of it: "I didn't bring that up here for pay; I brought it here because it belonged to you." He was from east of Pittsburgh but I don't know his name. People were more trustworthy and honest in those days.

The miners were paid by how much coal they mined, not by the hours they worked so there was some flexibility there. We operated the steam engines Saturday mornings and left it up to the men whether they wanted to work Saturday afternoons. We had an old fellow named Louie Dunkerley and every other day he would quit early about 3 P.M. But when Saturday came he would stay in the mine until late in the afternoon. Dad paid on Saturday, but one Saturday he said, "Louie, I can't pay you today. You've got too much coming and I don't have enough money here for you." Louie spread his week out more than the other miners and maybe it helped him to dig more coal. Louie told my father, "Oh that's all right, Fred. I've got a dollar and a half from last week that I haven't even touched yet." The miners kept track of how much we owed them with tokens. Each miner brought a loaded car to the shaft, then he hooked his on that car. When the miner brought a loaded car to the surface we credited that car load to the miner whose token was hanging from the car hook. If a miner had a car only half done at the end of the day he would leave it until the next day.

Once in a while miners would get into scrapes with each other. One time two miners got to arguing down below about whether or not to form a union. All of a sudden the shaft bell began to ring like crazy. You see, the miners communicated with the surface by bell. If the bell rang once it was a full coal car ready to be brought to the surface; if a man wanted to come up it was two or three rings. Well, those two old fellows came up out of the mine in the cage. They were yelling at each other about the union. All at once one of them hauled off at the other and they ran across the field yelling at each other and we didn't see them again until after dinner. But the men never brought the United Mine Workers union into this area. I think it was because conditions in the mines were not as bad here and the pay was pretty good. And there were company-owned houses at Number 2 and Number 5 and at Redmond near Slippery Rock. The miners could live in them without paying very high rent and the company store gave credit. That was a secure life for an immigrant. Redmond is gone now; all the houses are gone. But my grandson took a metal detector down there and dug up some tools and things where Redmond used to be.



WAYSIDE INN, WHICH BECAME THE ODD FELLOWS HOME!
 PHOTO: WALTER FRANKENBURG



AFTER THE 1917 ADDITION WAS ADDED!
 PHOTO: MERCER COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Small coal mines like we operated are gone now. There was one guy up at Pardoe who had one not long ago but even he leased his coal rights out and quit. It was the invention of powered cutting and loading machines that ruined mines. Big mines using machinery could mine coal much cheaper. And strip mining also destroyed the small shaft mines business. The first strip mine in this area was the mine where the Grove City park is located now. It was the Weber farm then. That mine operated in the 1920's. There was no law then that strippers had to restore the land and it took a lot of work later on to level out the park area. Even then a lot of farmers complained at what the land looked like after the stripping. Strippers were all from Ohio, even if the land owner was local because the people of this area wouldn't have liked it if a local had ruined the land. There was a lot of coal near the surface around Pardoe and that was ideal for stripping. So a lot of it was done. The people around there were furious and they raised hell about it. For years there was good stripping land around here that you couldn't lease because the farmers wouldn't let you; they didn't want their land ruined.

Most veins of coal were three to four feet thick, but in a mine over by the cemetery we found a vein five and a half feet thick. Unfortunately the tunnel bled water at the roof; it was like standing in a rainstorm and no miner wanted to work in it. If we could drill out of the hillside it would solve the problem but no miner wanted the job. Finally one old miner said that he would do it. My father said, "How much will you take?" And that old miner replied, "I'll take a dollar a car." That was very high pay! My father bought him an electric lamp because the water kept putting the carbide lamp out. And he bought that miner two rubber suits and a pair of high hip boots and that miner went down and he drove that tunnel through. That miner knew what he was doing because the coal in there was loose and easy to load. He would load 20 to 25 cars a day at \$1 each. An average day's work normally was about 6 or 7 loads. When he got his check he just about went crazy. All the miners wanted the job then! You see the vein was over five feet thick and it was not hard to break up; all you needed was a pick and it was easy. It was what they call a wash-in where the coal was washed in by the action of water; it was not hard packed.

In those days we didn't know anything about Black Lung disease. Some miners had coughs and they couldn't breath but nobody knew what was the matter with them; the doctor didn't even know. And smoke from the dynamite explosions gave miners trouble too. But a lot of miners were 65 and 70 years old before they quit mining. Of course they ate well on miner's wages so they were healthier than average that way and before automobiles everybody living in rural areas led quieter lives than they do now. A lot of miners were injured in the mines; it was a dangerous place to be. A rock falling on you was common. We never had a miner killed in one of our mines. Once in a while you would hear about a fatality but not often, about once a year or so.

I hauled coal to the college when their power plant was right here on South Broad street near the College View Apartments. I started when I was 10 or 12 so I was slow to be able to shovel all the coal off my wagon. Other teamsters would often help me out. People helped each other. I remember one time a teamster's horse fell and broke his leg at the edge of town. I told him that I would go out to our farm and get him Old Ned, one of our horses for him to use. He came out to the farm and wanted in the worst way to pay me for my help.

But my father told him, "You're not paying him nothing. I'm doing the paying around here. We might need your help one of these days."

The only holiday in the whole year that we didn't operate the shaft was Christmas. The other big holiday of the year, the Fourth of July, was no big deal to miners. The townspeople usually set off some firecrackers in Grove City on the Fourth, but the miners set off dynamite every day in the mine and it was a whole lot more dangerous. One Fourth of July an old miner came up out of the shaft at the end of the day and he said, "You know, this is the Fourth of July. We ought to have a little celebration." We put an old anvil we had there on top of a pile of wood with some mining powder under it. It went off with a bang, but the anvil rang so loud that people complained for miles around.

SIGOURNA HAVENS - 1889

I was born in 1889 at Brookville on the road to Cooks Forest. My father, William Mathers, taught music and school near Clarion. My grandfather had been killed in the Battle of the Wilderness during the Civil War so my father was eligible to attend a soldiers' orphan's school. The school was wonderful. He came out of there with practically a college education. He was never sick in his life because, he thought, there was no rich food at the orphanage. He also learned to box and that helped him when he taught because the toughest one, student or teacher, was the boss of the school; and Dad was asked to teach in a one room school whose students had kicked out several teachers.

Some teachers were only a year older than their students, 18 or 19, and they had had maybe a year of higher education and they didn't know the first thing about teaching. Some of them resorted to a reign of terror to keep the students in line; there was no principal's office to send misbehaving kids to and no one to help the teacher. One teacher Dad had to replace used a form of discipline he called "Taking the easy chair." The misbehaving student had to put his back against a wall and slide down as though he were sitting in a low chair. You had to lean hard against the wall or fall down. Your muscles would cramp. If the student fell down that teacher would stick a needle into his shoulder to encourage him to stay up. My father didn't have to do that to be a successful teacher. A good teacher could control without being mean. Poor teachers had to resort to torture.

My father taught for 30 years and received \$40 a month in his last year, about 1908. He and I would go out and play music and make more money than he did for teaching. He played at teachers' institutes. For a week at Christmas teachers would come into town and take rooms at the hotel. These institutes were to teach the teachers how to improve their teaching, but they also included some entertainment. One time the famous Polish pianist, Paderewski, played at an institute and complimented me on my piano playing. Sometimes operas would perform. That is how I got the name Sigourna. Dad named me after a character in an opera he performed in.

Sometimes Dad taught until 3 in the morning; he did not accept failure and would teach until students got it right. He taught music to all the grades too. And there would be sometimes 75 students in the school because a teacher could invite underage children to attend school if he wanted to. Dad let me and my sister attend when we were 4 or 5. It taught us to sit and listen.

There were few broken homes then or divorces. I only remember one illegitimate child.

My first job was at 15, about 1904. At the fair in Brookville my parents had a booth selling soup. I stayed with a cousin who was about to have a baby. That night she told me to get some string and a knife. I didn't even know where baby's came from and I helped her deliver the baby. She told me what to do. Having a baby was no big deal then; women would be working in the fields the next day.

In 1908 I got tuberculosis and my parents took me to West Virginia to recover at a sanatorium. They cooked at the sanitarium to pay our way. We were there for two years. Dad taught music on the side and he used his music to get a church going there. He began by just playing and singing until he attracted people in.

Then we went to the oil fields of Illinois, near Bridgeport because my brother told Dad to come. We started a boarding house which we built. The entire second floor was a large dormitory with cots in it. Eighteen boarders and others came in to eat. Boarders would give me their money to put in the bank but sometimes I had to keep the money overnight. One night, as I slept with the pocketbook by my head, I felt a hand reach for it and I screamed. All I could remember later was the buckle of the thief's belt. Next day I recognized the buckle on a boarder and he was arrested.

I met my husband when I mistook him for my brother. They had on similar suits. So I called him to come over, thinking it was my brother. He came over and kissed me and I realized it was not my brother. I slapped him but we started to date. We would go to the movies. Then he said we would have to get married right away because he was going on a trip so I agreed to marry him before he went. After we were married I asked him what the trip was he had to go on and he told me it was his wedding trip.

My husband took me out to the oil fields of Oklahoma and Texas where I worked side by side with him drilling for oil. I had to pack a six gun to ward off the many robbers there. Now I'm back in Pennsylvania with all my memories.

DON KELLY - 1930

I was born in 1930 in New Castle but was raised first in Forrestville on a farm in Worth township near Moraine where the Rambler's Rest restaurant is located today.

Forrestville had been a coal mining and limestone town but by the 1930's was primarily agricultural. Because it had been a mining town the population was about evenly divided between Italian immigrant families and old, original Protestant families like mine; my family had been in the area since I was growing up such as religion: there was the Catholic church and the Methodist church. But by the 1940's and 1950's through a variety of cross-cultural contacts, especially intermarriage, those lines were being erased pretty rapidly. Prohibition strained relationships in town. The Italian residents made their own wine and sold some of it. They were occasionally arrested for bootlegging. The old families had a strong Prohibitionist sentiment and they felt that this was another sign of the lack of morality on the part of the foreigners.

My first school was a one roomer called Center School which was near the little community of Jacksonville. Most of my elementary years were spent at Wolf Creek School near Moors' Corners, where the Dairy Queen and Patterson's furniture store now stand on Route 108 from Slippery Rock to Harlansburg. This place was named after an early settler there.

I knew Bill Redfoot, the man who while drunk was talked into murdering and robbing Howard Sidley in 1936 by "Blondie" Hoffman (See Mercer Memories: 1920-1950). Bill often worked for my father as a day laborer on our farm at Forrestville. He was about five feet eight or nine; not heavily built. I can remember that he had a heavy beard. He was not talked into the crime by stupidity; after all, he escaped detection for three years. But he did have a drinking problem. As I heard it suspicion towards him came only in 1939 when he got drunk in a saloon. A fellow drinker made Bill very angry and Bill said, "I'll kill you, and you wouldn't be the first person I've killed!" That outburst spread around and the State Police jailed him in the Mercer County jail on a drunkenness charge to see if they could get the story out of him. They planted two policeman in his cell disguised as convicts to ask leading questions and he admitted the crime to them. Bill got off with second degree murder and "Blondie" Hoffman, as the instigator of the crime, received life in prison. I remember my parents discussing the trial and they agreed with this verdict because of "Blondie" Hoffman's reputation. She was known as a rather loose, hoodlum type of operator; there were a lot of character witnesses against her and a lot of character witnesses for Bill.

World War II remains vividly in my mind. On Pearl Harbor day, December 7, 1941, we got up and went to church and then we decided to visit friends in Forrestville where we had formerly lived. After that we followed an old Sunday tradition of driving over to the place known as the Ice cream factory in Harrisville (the grocery store across the road from Bonetti's Health Care Center). The Hughes family had owned it for a couple of generations. We pulled up in front of that store and met my grand uncle's car. He rolled down the window and said, "Isn't it terrible?" My father said, "What's terrible? What has happened?" When we heard the news of the Japanese attack we rushed home to turn on the radio and hear the latest news and to wonder what the future held.

One reason I remember the war so clearly is that it touched me very personally. I had a cousin, a very dear cousin named Joseph Geary, who became something of a role model to me. He had been drafted into the army even before the beginning of the war. When he came home on furlough he always stayed at our house at least part of the time.

I admired him very much. He was killed in France and I still am affected by his loss. A local soldier was with him when he died. He was killed by a sniper's bullet in the siege of Cherbourg.

Another famous day of the war that I remember was D-Day, the invasion of Normandy in 1944. We shipped milk from our farm so we had to be up early and we didn't have time to turn on the radio. We got our milk in the cans and had it all ready when the milk truck arrived. The driver jumped down from the cab and announced, "We've hit France!" Again we rushed in as soon as we could to turn on the radio and hear the story.

Another famous day was more bewildering. It was August, 1945, and we were out in the fields making hay. As we entered the driveway with my father driving the tractor and me on top of the load of hay, suddenly came running out of the house and said, "Something has happened and it's all confused. We dropped some kind of a bomb and we wiped out a whole Japanese city!" She didn't know what the bomb was called and she didn't understand how one bomb could obliterate a whole city. The bomb she was talking about was the atomic bomb dropped in Hiroshima.

The funny thing about D-Day was that people were not at all that elated that we were at last fighting on the continent of Europe. Everybody knew that our army was in grave danger on the beaches of Normandy and we also knew that heavy casualties were now inevitable. There was not much elation either when Germany finally surrendered in May, 1945, because we still faced a dangerous invasion of Japan at that time, not knowing that the atomic bomb would make an invasion unnecessary. I was attending the high school at Slippery Rock at that time. When Germany surrendered we were marched down to the auditorium to listen to the radio broadcast. We were pleased but there was no dancing in the streets. That came when Japan surrendered. There was dancing in the streets of Slippery Rock when that happened.

During the war school children bought war savings stamps in ten cent and twenty-five cent denominations until you had bought \$18.75 worth of stamps and your book was full. This was turned in for a government war bond worth \$25 in ten years. The various classes competed to see who bought the most war stamps. There were also collections. On the farm I collected milk weed pods and sold them to the government to be used in life jackets because normally used filler for life jackets was in short supply. There were scrap drives; another fellow and I won one drive for collecting the most scrap because he had a relative who had collected keys for a lifetime as a hobby. He gave them to us and since they were very heavy we won the scrap drive award.

I remember that sugar was rationed and to share the sugar out fairly my mother gave each of us in the family a tin can which we then decorated to suit our tastes. In each can went that person's weekly sugar allowance to do with as he desired. You could eat it all in one day or parcel it out to suit yourself, but you didn't get any more if you finished your supply before the week was up. You had to discipline yourself. Meat rationing didn't affect us on the farm since we butchered our own meat. Gasoline rationing actually was helpful to me, a teenage boy at the time. Car owners received a windshield sticker depending on how much gasoline the government allowed each driver; A stamp provided only two gallons a week; and B stamp provided a bit more; R stamps provided the most gasoline for farmers producing food for the war effort who had to drive many miles into town each week. My father got more gasoline than most people and as a young man I could use my father's car more than the town boys whose fathers had only A stamps. By today's standards the highways were almost deserted during the war.

My father was an Isolationist before we got into World War II. As far as he was concerned Europe could fight its own battles and we ought to stay out. Among local Republicans there was the distinct suspicion that President Roosevelt was maneuvering us into the European war and it wasn't until Pearl Harbor that he changed his mind. My father felt the same way about the Roosevelt New Deal; he was bitterly opposed to it. Surprisingly he got more liberal with age and today in his seventies he is much more liberal than he was in his twenties. In those days under no circumstances would he have ever accepted any government welfare money. Before the Depression he had a very good job at Western Electric. He lost the job when the Depression hit, and rather than accept welfare we went to live on the farm to prevent starvation. He also sold products door-to-door to make a little extra money. I remember one product especially called Zanol because he won an award for selling more than anyone else in several states. Zanol came out with a composition sole and glue that you could use to resole your worn out shoes for next to nothing, just the product for the Depression because people didn't even have the money to go to a shoe repairman, to let alone buy a new pair of shoes.

My parents were anti-Japanese before the war but not because Japan had invaded China. I can remember my parents doing their Christmas shopping and lifting up every item to look for where it was made. If it was made in Japan they would not buy it because so many Americans were out of work.

I remember when Alf Landon was the Republican candidate for the Presidency in 1936 against Roosevelt. Landon was born in West Middlesex, Pa., but that didn't make any difference in the one room school I attended. I can remember wearing a big sunflower campaign button for Landon (Landon had moved to Kansas and the sunflower was the official flower of that state). Everybody for Landon wore the sunflower button. Republican kid in the school was not an easy task believe me!

One time my grandmother had me on her knee and asked me what I wanted to do when I grew up. I thought about that for a while and I answered, "Grandma, I want to work for the W.P.A." I realize now that I said this because the fathers of just about all my classmates existed by working for the W.P.A. and I was a little ashamed of my father because he didn't work for the W.P.A. and I was at the conclusion that the height of human aspirations was to work for the W.P.A.

I remember the German prisoners of war held at Camp Reynolds in 1944 and 1945. At the time I was on the campus of Slippery Rock Normal attending the laboratory high school. The college was training navigators for the Army Air Force and the Government had various temporary buildings to put up and they used these German prisoners to do it. Being on campus I saw a lot of them. Most of them were ex-members of the Africa Korps. This must have been an elite organization because those men impressed me as big, tanned and healthy looking individuals. They seemed to be as happy as they could be and they didn't impress me as arrogant. Maybe they were happy to be out of the war.

All troop movements during the war were top secret to prevent sabotage and this led to an incident which got a little scary. A cousin of mine, Don Stewart, who had been drafted came through Connellsville, Pa. on a troop train going overseas. An uncle of mine happened to be at the station there when he heard a voice shout, "Hey Red! Red Kennedy!"

He looked up and it was my cousin on the troop train. "We're going through New Castle. Call my wife! Call my wife!" Well, my uncle not only called Don's wife but every relative he could think of and we all rushed to the B. and O. railroad station at Mahoning town, south of New Castle. We didn't know if the train would stop but we were going to wave at the train at least. The train did stop for a short time and Don jumped out. There was a big family reunion and then the train left. But then some Military Police lined us all up for questioning and on the train MP's questioned Don for several hours. They wanted to know how we knew that Don's train was going to come through New Castle. The MP's were very angry, but we explained it just as it happened. There was no need for a USO in Slippery Rock because there was a time during the war when there were a total of nine men on the Slippery Rock Normal campus and that meant that there were about 791 unattached women on the same campus. The Air Force personal had no need of outside help in arranging their social lives.

Slippery Rock was a very quiet town in those days. There was one policeman, Gus Tellich. Gus was a very humane man who would much rather give a youngster a talking to, perhaps report him to his parents, rather than make an arrest.

Slippery Rock was my town but since I spent my seventh grade year in New Castle I had friends there too. When I wanted to go out for a night of fun I would walk the two miles to Route 108. If a car were coming toward Slippery Rock I would hitch hike that way; if a car were going toward New Castle I would run across the road and hitch hike in that direction.

There wasn't much to do in Slippery Rock, but I wasn't bothered by it since I was a country boy; I never had learned how to play basketball, tennis or such like. My pleasures were outdoor activities like hunting, fishing and especially trapping. For that period the money in trapping was quite good. I came to Slippery Rock two or three times a week, mainly for dating because this was where the girls were, primarily town girls, but I dated a few college girls because there were so few college boys around.

The Roxy theater, built in 1939, was about the only recreation center in town. The Roxy, for a small town, was an excellent theater at least into the 1950's; it was clean, it was new, the seating was comfortable, and the sound was fine. By the time it closed down in the 1970's it had deteriorated seriously, largely I think because young people had begun to lose their respect for property and were tearing it apart. There were two places you could go to get something to eat. One was Isaly's, located almost across the street from the Methodist church on Franklin street. Roller skating was big in the 1940's and there were two big rinks nearby; one was at Stoughton Beach on Slippery Rock Creek and the other a half mile farther down the road to Butler at Etna Springs. The Slippery Rock Hot Dog Shop was not there until the late 1950's. It had formerly been an appliance store owned by a family named Crawford. I forgot to mention another restaurant called the Rocket Inn located where the Boron station is now. It was located in one of the oldest buildings in Slippery Rock. The downstairs was a restaurant and the upstairs was a boarding establishment; some college students lived there after World War II. The First National Bank has always been on its corner within my memory.

The Uber furniture store was a combined funeral home and furniture store when Elton Uber's father owned it. I think the Uber's have had that store for about four generations. There were two grocery stores side by side near the bank; the A & P and the (Sam) Friedman and Alper store. Next to them was Jacob Friedman's dry goods store. Jacob Friedman began coming into Slippery Rock as a pack peddler about 1900 and later settled down and opened the store. Then Sam Friedman came in and opened the grocery and meat market. Anti-semitism here was not malicious, just insensitivity. I have heard people tell Sam Friedman to his face, "Boy, Sam, I really 'jewed' him down." But the Friedman's had been in this community for a long time and I think they were generally accepted. Mr. Alper's sons were good athletes and played on the local team and fit into the community quite well.

In those days the man who impressed me as the preeminent town leader was John Cheeseman, who was the local Chevrolet-Oldsmobile dealer. He moved his car dealership to the Grove City Road after the war; before that it was located about where the Lil Shopper is today on Franklin street.

Bingham's hardware store was up next to where Ord's drug store is. The Bingham's were old family as were the Bard's who ran Bard's dry goods store for generations. There was a five and ten cent store where the Mellon Bank is now.

The building at the corner with the mill stone mortared into its side is a very old one. It was originally built by a man named Topley and it was known as Topley's Terminal Grill. It was the stage coach and dray stop, later the bus stop when they came in, which linked New Castle, Mercer, Butler, Grove City, Kiester railroad station. I don't know if there was bus service to Redmond. Redmond was a coal mining village a mile east of the Grove City road about a mile north from the Forrestville road.

My grandfather, a minister, used to go to Redmond to preach when it was in its boom days about 1900. That was a risky business in those days because the miners were not always receptive to Christianity. Only a few foundations remain of the houses that constituted Redmond. If you want to go there you go out Route 108 towards Route 8. You turn left at Harmony road just before the John Brydon farm; you go up a short hill on Harmony road and then a long hill. At the top of the second hill you see before you a long valley with a pond on the right. Redmond was located on both sides of the road at the bottom of the valley.

All the streets in Slippery Rock had been paved by the time of the war, but many alleys were still unpaved at that time. I don't remember the paving of Route 8 and I do remember when it was widened and made straighter from Butler to Franklin. They cut through many hills to do this. As a result the complexion of the whole village of Forrestville was changed because it had been located on hilly land. The new Route 8 cut right through those hills. Some houses are now much higher than Route 8 where the road had formerly gone up a hill. It is quite different from what it was then. My great-grandmother died at the age of 90 in 1940 or 1941. Just before she died the new Route 8 opened up. Her last trip in an automobile was to see the changes made at Forrestville. She could not believe what she saw, how they had cut through all the hills of the town. It really did destroy the old character of the town.

I remember the Old Stone House on Route 8 when it had only two or three walls standing. In those days it had an undesirable reputation among old timers because of the counterfeit rings associated with it in the mid-nineteenth century, and because it was located in a place where hard drink could be had. It was probably a roudy place occasionally. There was one man, however, who spent his lifetime bending anyone's ear he could get next to to restore that old place. That man was Leonard Kiester. He had been a school teacher most of his life, and had an abiding interest in local history, and was very dynamic man with a deep, booming voice; he never tired of pushing for the restoration of the Old Stone House. He was especially interested in the Wigton murders by the Indian Mohawk.

In 1944 I came to the laboratory school of Slippery Rock Normal to go to high school. In order to qualify I had to pass the county-wide high school entrance test. This kind of entrance test lasted until at least the late 1940's. It was very comprehensive; it covered not only the basic skills like mathematics and grammar, but there were many questions on, for example, the poetry we had learned. I don't know how many kids flunked the test, but it was not uncommon to flunk it. The first test was given in mid-April when the school year ended; this was a farming community and kids were needed at home in planting season so school ended in early spring. So about April 15th I came into the lab school to take the all-day examination: three hours in the morning and three in the afternoon. Those who failed the first test were given a second opportunity in August. Generally those who failed the first test also failed the second test. You could repeat eighth grade and try again the next year if you wanted to, but there was no guarantee that you would pass by repeating the year.

I am not aware that my attending a rural one room school was a handicap in passing this entrance test. One room schools were supposed to be weak in science, but I had a teacher whose special interest was science and she took us on field trips and taught us to identify birds, plants and trees. She probably did a better job than any city school could have done. My fifth grade teacher had literary interests and he read the classics aloud to us and introduced me to good literature. Another teacher who came to our school was a musician and awakened in us his special interest. There was only disadvantage to the one room school: being in one big room you heard the lessons from the grades above you several times before you got there. By the time I reached sixth grade I had heard the material many times and was bored by it so that I became a behavior problem.

In the 1940's the lab school was where all students at the normal school did their student teaching, both high school and elementary. This was done so that all the teachers at the lab school could be "master teachers" who would be models for the student teachers. They all had their M.A. degrees and a few had Ph. D's. Many of my teachers at the lab school also taught at the college simultaneously; Wilda Brubaker, Keller Shelar, Kurt Thompson for whom Thompson Field is named, and others taught in both places. There were others who began there exclusively as high school teachers who later became full time college staff: Joseph Rrasier and Charles Halt. These were my teachers and they were taught to be truly "master teachers"; the entire staff of the school would far outshine the average secondary school.

There were only about 300 students in the high school; my graduating class of 1948 amounted to 38 students. Only a few students dropped out of high school, many fewer than today. I think that the reason was that those who lacked the interest in high school quit after eighth grade to go to work; they didn't hang around like today and harass the serious students. Most of our potential trouble-makers were not pressured to remain in school, quite the contrary; they were encouraged to get a job doing what they wanted to do. There was no strong social stigma to quitting school without a diploma; I could name several students who quit yet continued to socialize with their old classmates.

High school sports were extremely limited. Slippery Rock had had a football team until about 1940, but the school was so small that it was "six man" football and when the war came along even this was discontinued. There was only basketball and a rifle team when I arrived in 1944. Even this was limited because there were no "activities busses", so those who lived in the country needed their own transportation or they could not participate. Besides, if your dad had 20 cows to milk he didn't want you hanging around school any longer than necessary.

Basketball requires particular athletic skills that I didn't have and in my senior year a number of us boys went to the high school principal, John Dier, to ask for a football team. He attempted to discourage us by saying that there was no coach, no equipment, and no community interest. We were not to be denied so we got the basketball coach to volunteer his services, the college donated its old equipment, and we collected a large number of parental approved letters. Mr. Dier then had to take the issue to the school board, assuring us that it would turn down football. Our spokesperson was John Brydon, who had the gift of gab even then and whose mother was on the school board. John skillfully laid out our case and asked: "What are we waiting for?" The board turned us down.

But we played one football game that year anyway. Some of our fellows arranged to play a sandlot football game with Boyers, a nearby coal mining town. One of the guys got an old truck and went around picking us all up. We had never played as a team before. We met the Boyers team on an old baseball field on a Sunday afternoon. We were discouraged by the situation: the field was littered with stones and our opponents were formidable. The player opposite me weighed 235 pounds and was a World War II veteran. They also had some players from the Grove City high school football team. But we beat them. We put the news in the school paper and the Slippery Rock Signal, but the town did not get a football team until the early 1960's.

The long delay in getting football here was because there was strong opposition to football in the town. The change came when a consolidated high school was built here in 1957. The small Harrisville, Portersville and Prospect high schools were shut down and the new Slippery Rock high school incorporated their students. These students brought in a greater interest in football. And when the first school superintendent, Dr. Clarence Long, formerly director of the laboratory school, retired and was replaced by Neil Williams who favored football, then we got it.

Dating was more formal than it seems to be today. You asked a girl for a date, she accepted, and you planned in advance where you were going and what you were going to do.

At first it was difficult for me, a farm boy, to mix well at the "sock hops" on Friday night; I didn't know how to dance very well. At my first dance I was shyly sitting in the corner when Dorothy Kastner saw my shyness and came over and asked me to dance. I told her that I couldn't dance but she insisted that I would pick it up.

You couldn't take a girl anywhere until you "got wheels", but by the time I was a junior we were pretty mobile. We had some sophisticated dates in those days; it was still the "big band" era and the Palace theater in Youngstown booked all of the "name" bands of the day and north of Youngstown there was a place called Yankee Lake. So we got to take our girls to see Tommy Dorsey, Harry James, Jimmy Dorsey, Horace Heigt, Cab Calloway, and Stan Kenton. We had money because there were jobs to be had in small defense plants and other places; some of us worked part time after school and a few even worked full time after school. And of course farm boys trapped animals for their pelts or raised chickens. Glen Cooper was the first one of us to have his own car: a 1946 Oldsmobile. Two of my friends from Worth Township and I saved up \$15 among us and bought a 1932 Chevrolet. At the time we were dating three young ladies from Branchton and getting there was a problem so we bought the car. We were too young for drivers' licences so we were told by our parents to only drive the back roads to and from Branchton. We had no money for license plates or maintenance and soon the tires began to blow. When all four tires had blown we rode the tire rims. It was difficult to avoid the police making all that noise and finally the rims wore out too and that ended that.

There was never a time at the lab school when there wasn't a student teacher in the class and we students became very professional in evaluating and handling them. We judged them on manner and competency. We could immediately recognize a student teacher who did not know his subject and who tried to bluff his way through by being aggressive. We were merciless with this type. But if we perceived that the student teacher knew his stuff even though he was timid we would try to help him to develop.

When I graduated from high school I had no plans for college; I wanted to get a job. My first job I got through a man who now works in Buildings and Grounds at the college: Glenn Grossman. We were high school friends and he had gotten a job on a road crew widening Route 8 from Harrisville into Venango County. He got me a job on the project. I weighed 145 pounds and I had to load 150 pound forms onto trucks for moving and then unload them farther on. We were members of the Laborers and Hod Carriers Union. Knowing that the job might not last long we tried to avoid paying our union dues. In those days union dues were not automatically deducted from your paycheck; the dues were collected by a union official. When he came around we would try to hide, but you had to be careful because he weighed about 300 pounds and stood about 6 to 8 feet tall. If he saw me I paid, but if I saw him first I would hide behind a machine until he left.

That job lasted only six weeks and two friends, Tony Isacco and George Dixon, and I decided to make our fortunes in California. We went out there in a cream and brown 1942 Cheverolet. We didn't have the money to rent a motel room so we drove 24 hours a day. The other guys would always give me the midnight-to-eight stretch to drive. I could never finish my driving turn without getting sleepy and about 6 A.M. my head would be nodding. I would almost wreck and they would get mad and tell me to get in the back of the car and sleep.

One morning in Arizona I was sleeping in the back of the car when I suddenly realized that the car wasn't moving. I raised my head and saw my buddies petting a large mule deer. Being only half awake the Biblical reference to the lion and the lamb lying down together flashed through my head and I thought we had crashed and I was in Heaven. As it turned out it was only that my friends had decided to detour into the Grand Canyon where many of the animals are tame.

We stayed in California for six weeks, living in a quonset hut for free beside the home of one of my friend's sisters near Pasadena. We couldn't get any work and one day we were driving near Pasadena. We were on a big superhighway (even then California had big highways) and traffic was moving at California speeds. George knew he had to make a left turn but he wasn't sure where. Then without warning he came to a complete stop in the right lane and tried to cross three lanes to get over to the left lane. Immediately there was the sound of many cars' brakes screeching and then the sound of a crash. We talked our way out of that fix but we were afraid the police would question us so we left for Pennsylvania early the next morning.

We got home in 72 hours. We stopped for gasoline only. We didn't even stop to change drivers; the driver would pull himself up and the new driver would slide under him to take over. We were glad to get home.

I got a job as an oiler on a drag line in a strip mine. It was dirty and sometimes dangerous work. One of my jobs was to clean the oil and grease off the interior walls of the operator's compartment with gasoline. One morning I forgot to make sure that the coal stove for heating the compartment was out and I leaped out and fortunately we fell into a spoil pile which was loose enough to break our fall and for me to be able to thrust my burning hands into the dirt to extinguish the flames. With that I decided that the strip mine was too dirty and illegal for me to stomach any more. In those days mine owners and mine inspectors were often in collusion with one another and it disgusted me. So I quit and joined the navy.

You could enlist for only one year then and that's what I did. I served as an aerial gunner on a patrol bomber. I got out in January, 1950, and took a job in a steel plant in Campbell, Ohio. That summer I got a letter from Leonard Duncan, who was Dean of the college here and father of a high school friend of mine. He had encouraged me several times to go to college because he thought I would do well but I had not responded. Now he wrote and said that this would be the last time he would encourage me to go to college, but that if I would come to Slippery Rock he would help me to enroll.

I decided that if he had that much faith in me that I ought to give it a try. I enrolled for one semester and ran out of money. With the Korean War beginning to heat up I realized that there would be a GI Bill for Korean veterans as well as World War II veterans so I decided to go back to the navy for two years and get enough money for college.

In those days about half the curriculum was courses I had to take: two years of history, a year of math. And all the courses were taught in Old Main except for the science courses which were taught in what is now the Behavioral Science building. One of my first courses was Ancient and Medieval History taught by Charles Halt. Halt was a good teacher and he liked to frighten students into working harder; he had a reputation and many students were afraid of him. I wasn't because I had had him in the lab school and knew that his bark was worse than his bite. On the first day he spent the entire period telling us how tough the class was going to be, how demanding he would be, and how we were all going to have to turn over a new leaf if we were going to survive. Then he gave the reading assignment. The next time the class met he discovered that I had not read the assignment and that was what he was waiting for: he could now make an example of someone in front of the class. Before I could explain he spent 20 minutes describing me as the worst example of a student. Finally he had to take a breath and I was able to blurt out that I hadn't read the assignment because the textbook was all sold out. He mumbled an apology and went on. As a teacher myself I have always tried to remember not to put my foot in my mouth quite so far as Mr. Halt did that morning.

Classes in Old Main were held on the second and third floors. The floors incidently, were oiled to keep the dust down; they were not varnished floors. The place was a fire trap; it would have burned like tinder had it ever caught fire and there were no fire escapes (it had been built in 1889).

WILLIAM KORBY - 1899

I was born in 1899 in Lawrence County about eight miles out of New Castle. I had six years of schooling. I started out in farming 18 hours a day for \$10 a month, seven days a week at 14 years of age. Another farmer asked me, "what is that old skinfling paying you?" When I told him he said that he would pay me \$12 and no work after 6 P.M. Working for him I got up at 5 A.M. to milk. After a short lunch we would clean out the barns and then milk the cows again. In winter I also had to pump water out of a deep well through a kinky hose. It took 160 strokes to fill the barrel, I'll never forget that! I finished up at 11:00 at night washing bottles. How hard kids worked then. And all for \$10 a month.

My father and two sisters were killed when I was two years old. In those days locomotives used oil headlamps which were hard to see very far away. A long line of freight cars were parked across the road so a very small break was made in the train so that buggies could cross the tracks. Just as my father came out from between the freight cars, a passenger train came roaring along the other track. The weak light from his headlight gave no warning and the train hit my father's buggy. That night my mother gave birth to my little sister. I don't know how she did it.

About two years later my mother married again but my stepfather died soon after. Mother **got by by** keeping boarders. Many people did this. We had about 15 boarders. The railroad sent a lawyer soon after while my mother was still distraught.

He told her to trust him and everything would be all right, so she signed the paper he gave her. It was a paper absolving the railroad of all responsibility in my father's death. Later they notified her that they had delivered a tombstone to the depot for her to put on my father's grave. My mother said "That can just lay there if that's all they're going to do." If they had only taken the trouble to cut the train wider.

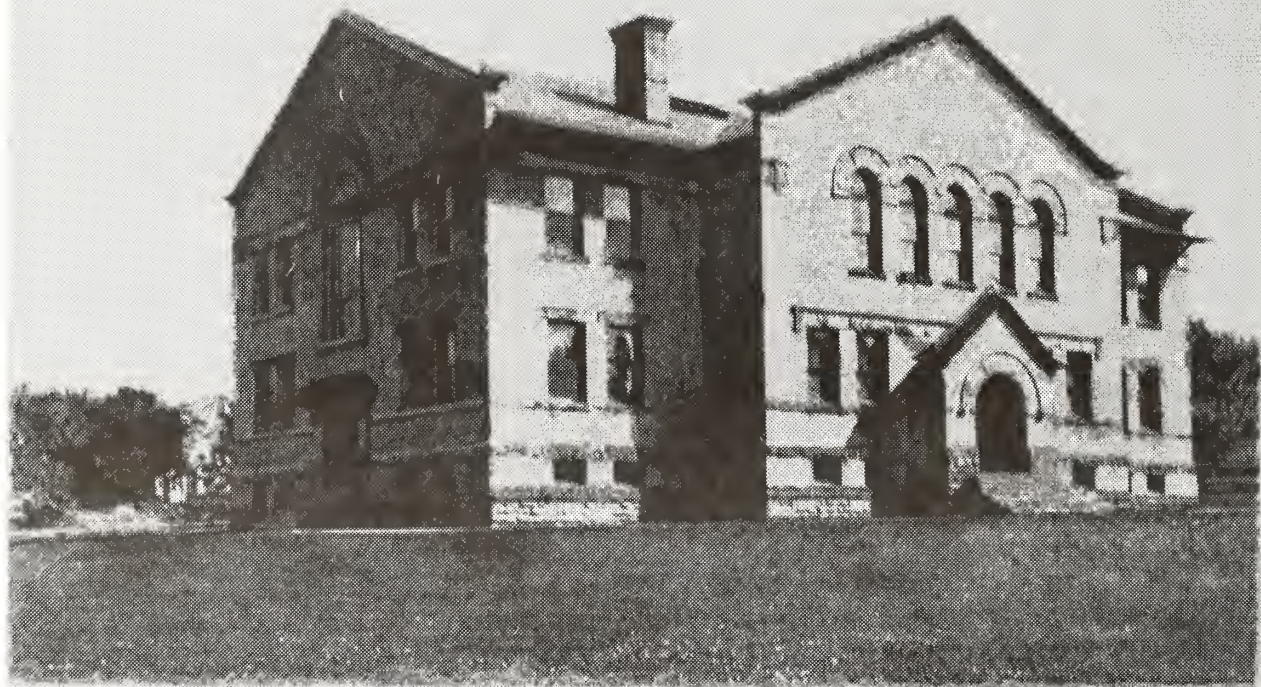
My three brothers and I helped out. After I worked for the farmers I got a chance to work in a limestone quarry throwing switch for a dollar a day. Oh boy, I couldn't turn that kind of money down. In those days they used steam shovels to load limestone blocks onto flat cars pulled by a small "dinky" engine. They had two trains going all the time. I switched the trains. And you had better do it right. After I worked there for three months the engine driver quit. I was only 15 but they asked me if I could run the engine. "Sure I can!" I said. "Well, get up there and keep it moving." You had to do everything. Throw your own coal on and keep the fire going. It kept you busy but it was fun. Sometimes the cars would go off the track, but with blocks and things we would soon have them back on the track, but those engines would go like the dickens. The most dangerous point was a sudden turn at the bottom of a hill.

In those days before they put in safety measures many men were hurt on the job. They would blow out big pieces of limestone with explosives. If you didn't hear the call of "fire"! you could get hit with flying chunks of rock. After a while of working with dynamite you get used to it. My brother and I used to take a stick of dynamite and cut it into four pieces and attach an **ignition** cap to it with a fuse to see who could make the best explosion. That sends chills up and down my spine every time I think of it. Hard hats didn't come in until the late 1920's when the new skyscrapers were going up and were put together with rivets. These rivets would often be dropped and hit people on the head and fracture their skulls. So hard hats came in and soon many employers were using them. We worked ten hours a day six days a week with no holidays except Christmas. On Thanksgiving we would work but we had a big dinner when we got home.

HAROLD McCOLLOUGH - 1911

I was born in Slippery Rock in 1911 at 357 Franklin Street where I have lived my entire life.

Before the Foodland market (now the Slippery Rock Auto Parts store) was built on Franklin street there was a great big old house that used to be a tourist home, Rhodes' tourist home. A tourist home was what a motel is now. People who were driving through needed a place to stop over for the night. The Cheeseman-Fleeger auto agency used to be where the Quaker State gas station is located now. There were two blacksmiths shops there too, one just west of Cheeseman-Fleeger. Keyle had one and Roberts had one. They went out of business during or just after World War II.



NOW CALLED WEST HALL. MILLER AUDITORIUM WILL LATER BE LOCATED AT FAR RIGHT AND
 OBSCURE THE ENTRANCE LOCATED THERE. PHOTO: MERCER COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Music Hall and Music Hall State Normal School, Slippery Rock, Pa.

JUDGING BY THE AUTOMOBILE THIS SCENE TOOK PLACE BETWEEN 1905 and 1915.
 CAPOLA IS THERE. PHOTO: MERCER COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

My first job was carrying water for the ditch diggers who were digging the water line in Slippery Rock in 1920 or 1921. They first started laying city water lines in Slippery Rock about 1908 and gradually extended them. Sewers didn't come in until the 1930's as part of a W.P.A. project. Before the sewers people in Slippery Rock used outhouses or indoor plumbing attached to septic tanks. In fact, I think there still a few old houses in Slippery Rock using or at least hooked up to septic tanks.

It was not hard to find a job in Slippery Rock. People in Slippery Rock were farmers or worked at the Bessemer plant in Grove City. Back in the 1880's there was an iron furnace down where Rock Creek Park is now and there was work there. A relative of mine ran it. They made Bingham plows and coal grates. The grist mill was put in later, but the water fall were there when the grist mill and was used by the iron furnace to give power to the iron forge. I never saw the furnace but I was showed several times where it was.

The first auto agency in town was a Ford agency located where Snyder's garage is now. Snyder's has been there since World War II at least because they hauled soldiers for the Army during the war from Camp Reynolds up near Transfer down to Pittsburgh. It was not a bus garage when it was a Ford agency. I can't remember its name but some of the painted sign can still be seen on the outer wall, although it is very faded.

The red brick home at the top of the hill on North Main street now owned by the Rodgers is one of the oldest homes in town. It was originally owned by the Covert's. I don't know his first name; I only knew him by his nickname of "Cheesy". They had a coal mine right in back of the house across the run under what is now the community park. It was a slope mine into the side of the hill. Up along side of the cemetery you can still see where the mine entrance started into the hill.

For entertainment during the 1920's we had Billingsley's movie theater. What is now the grange hall on the alley behind Main street was built especially for Billingsley's theater. It went out of business during the Depression. The Roxy theater was built in 1939 and Billingsley's had been shut down for four or five years before that. Billingsley's closed down when the owner died and no one took it over. By that time kids could drive to Butler or Grove City to go to the movies. But the college provided entertainment too. They ran a movie in the old chapel. Whenever they could get a good movie they would advertise it in the local newspaper and townspeople would attend to. They showed first run movies.

There are a few landmarks around Slippery Rock. On the North Liberty road about 100 yards south of the Wolf Creek bridge there are the remains of the Old Mill road which now is the boundary between the Barker and Mennell properties on Route 258. Going east it came out on the Grove City road. Farmers used this road to get to Christley's grist mill where Route 258 crosses Wolf creek. It continued farther west on the north side of Wolf Creek at least to the Ansel McConnell farm.

Redmond was located east of the Grove City road. You can reach its site by going east on Route 108 and turning left at Harmony road. The town was located on both sides of Harmony road.

The school house was on the right side. In its heyday during in the 1880's it must have had a population of about 500. By the 1920's the Redmond kids were walking into Slippery Rock for school, because so many people had moved out of the old company houses and come into Slippery Rock. There were only about seven or eight families living there then. By the 1920's the coal was gone and the company houses were quite old. Most of the people who lived there were immigrants, Scotch-Irish mostly. They were pretty rough but there was no hostility between Slippery Rock and Redmond. They had a company store that was still running in 1917 and 1918.

All three of the Redmond mines were drift mines into the side of the hills. One of them came down through what was then the McFate farm, and the old Wollford farm and across that hill back of where the Crane's live now (on Cemetery road). I don't know where the mine tunnel crossed Route 108 into the Vincent property. Another came west across the Reed's land towards the Grove City road and the mine tunnel surfaced near the Grove City road. Those miners who lived west of there would enter the mine at that Grove City road entrance. That tunnel was about a mile long. The third tunnel went northeast toward the Fielding farm and almost as far as Adams Corners where Routes 108 and 8 meet. It was a big mine.

The coal was shipped out on a railroad specially built to the Redmond mines; it was a standard gauge track to New Castle. It crossed the Grove City road just south of the entrance into the golf course, just across the run from the A-frame building. That was so that it could reach the Cooper gravel pit too. I don't know where it crossed Route 258 but it may have done at Valcourt where an old railroad embankment still exists. It crossed Wolf creek somewhere south of Lake Lindy. There was a branch line to the limestone quarry. That was near the hill on the other side of the golf course. Today you can reach that limestone and gravel area by turning west off of the Grove City road at Kyles Corners. There are several ponds now where the quarries were if you can get into them. Operations at the limestone quarry didn't start until the coal mines were about played out.

The area between Wolf creek and Slippery Rock was stripped in the 1950's. It was a pretty large operation because it went all through the Kelly farm. It went as far south as Kelly boulevard in the subdivision north of Slippery Rock. All those evergreens planted behind Miriam Barker's land were planted by the strippers; that was the law by that time. But they didn't cover the whole strip mine; that's why the area around Kelly boulevard is devoid of big vegetation.

The very old house on the Butler road almost opposite the high school was lived in until about World War II. I don't know why it's boarded up; some of the floors in that house are just as good as the day they were put it.

Slippery Rock State College at one time mined its own coal and made its own electricity. The coal mine was located about where the round science building is today. The miners were some of the fellows who had worked at Redmond before those mines played out. The college didn't sell any coal, they just mined enough for the college to run its generators and heat the school.

The college was electrified long before the town. Slippery Rock borough electrified in the late 1920's when the power lines came out this way; but the college had its own generators as long as I can remember. I can remember reading by gas lights in my house; it wasn't all that much worse than reading by electricity.

The college also had a pig farm to raise meat for the dining rooms. They had at least a hundred pigs, maybe more. The pig farm was right below the coal mine entrance, about where the little lake is today. The college also farmed the area on Kiester road next to the field house where the first Thompson football Field used to be. They played football up on the hill where the baseball field is now. That's where I played my football when I was in high school; in fact we played with the normal school team most of the time. When the high school first got a full team most of the time we played with the Normal school team. I can remember Coach Thompson telling us, "When you scrimmage with the normal team do it very gently. They don't have boys as big as you." After the high school team was formed about half the normal school travelling team was made up of high school players because we were physically bigger than them.

There has never been another coach like Coach Thompson and never will be another like him. He was a big man, well over six feet tall and weighing at one time 265 pounds. His brother was even bigger than he was; they both were All-Americans. They were born on the Butler road about where Merschmer's trailer sales is today. He was a good coach. He could be tough but he didn't need to be. Nobody argued with him, he was just too big and too easy going to ever get into an argument with anybody. As a coach he was very smart; he taught a lot of football players. His wife is still alive. She is up at Sunny View Home in Grove City. Under Coach Thompson Slippery Rock Normal were state champions several times.

I became night watchman at the college after I came back from the service in 1948 or 1949. They asked me if I knew the faculty. I said that yes I did and that at one time I knew all the students by name too. I hired because the dietician complained that she was losing a lot of food supplies. I caught the thief; it was a student who was working part time as one of the night watchman. President Weisenfluh took his job away but he graduated the next spring. They weren't too tough on him. As night watchman I saw very little crime; once in a while there would be high jinx or spirits would get too high. That was all. I also helped transport the students in from the Kiester railroad station over on Route 8. The college had a hack and the livery stable had a hack. A hack was a big wagon with seats for many passengers.

The livery stable was a 2 story building where the theatre was, but an empty lot is now. Both stories were used for a stable. The bottom housed horses' and the top was used for wagon repairs. It was between two other stores. There was a hotel called Welch's hotel. I don't know much about the hotel because my parents would not allow me to go there since they sold things there kids were not supposed to be around. The hotel closed when the First National bank bought it because they needed more room. I never remember the bank anywhere but on the corner but I believe it had been located earlier somewhere up the street. The Citizens bank was located up where Isaly's is now. Some money was embezzled there and forced the Citizens out of business sometime in the 1920's. Then Isaly's came into that location.

Cooper's building materials was the first business west of town, except for the coal mine in the hill just east of Cooper's on the north side of Route 108. Gill's used car sales has been out there west of town for a long time. He was born out on the old Gill farm west of Lee Ligo's home where the borough water works is located. The borough went that far out of town for water because there are two flowing wells out there with all the water we need and when the town wells became inadequate they tapped into the flowing wells.

St. Peter's Catholic Church was the first Catholic church in town. I think it was built in about 1938 to serve the college students here. Formerly the Catholic college students had had to go as far away as Forrestville to find a Catholic church.

I can't think of any of the old families that are still left in Slippery Rock. The Bingham's are gone, the Bard's are gone; Dr. Bob Watson's grandmother is about the oldest one left around here. I believe she was a Wallace. Dr. Vincent still has a property in town, but he lives in Florida too.

The land around Community Park has been strip mined where the horse show ring and little league field is now. The owner, Mr. Bowler, traded the land for some that the borough owned. The top of that hill has not been stripped. You can see just above the horse show ring where the stripping stopped.

The town began to expand north on the Grove City road. Cheeseman-Fleeger built their new building after the war and the McGowan lumber yard built there about 1950.

After the war a monument was built in that little park on South Main street. It was donated to the town for a park as long as it was used for nothing but a park. That is a valuable corner property and someone once wanted to buy it from the borough but it couldn't be done because of the original conditions of the donation.

There were several doctors in town. Dr. Hockenberry, not the dentist, had his office on Maple street near the corner of Cooper. He had his office attached to his house; that office has been renovated by a later owner to be a wood-working shop. He was the only doctor in town for quite a while. Then there was a Dr. Grubb. Dr. Studebaker had his office right across Main street from the college; his daughter, Mrs. Jack, still owns the property. Dr. Vincent practiced here for 40 to 50 years. He had his office connected to his home on Cooper at the corner of Main street; he was the brother of Hezzie Vincent. They were born up on the big hill just north of Wolf creek on the North Liberty road. Edna Tissue is Dr. Vincent's niece.

The second house up from that little park is one of the oldest houses in town. And the third house up from the park used to have a watering trough in front of it. I think it was used to water the stagecoach horses with but I'm not sure.

On the northeast corner at the traffic light there used to be a big general store; they sold everything. There was a hotel on the northwest corner where the Boron station is now. It was a brick building. There were two hotels in town because it was a crossroads and a lot of people stopped here. And a lot of travelling salesmen came through.

EDNA PATTERSON - 1907

I was born in 1907 between Barkeyville and Clintonville. When I was 15 I began to work. At first house work but later I would take anything I could get. I made \$2 a week and room and board in my first job. It was about two miles from my parents' home. I helped with house work and watching the children. I got to go home every two or three weeks. I was not lonely because there were a number of children in the family and I fit right in. Later I got jobs in Grove City.

My favorite job was working in the kitchen at the Grove City hospital. You would be amazed at the changes that have taken place since then. The waiting room was a little cubby hole and two little benches. But I don't think the food has changed much. I ate the food then and it seemed pretty good to me and it still does. The doctors were nice, especially Dr. Don James; I don't think doctors have changed much.

BERTHA RAY - 1903

I entered Slippery Rock Normal School in 1921 and took the two year course. My favorite professor was Dr. Ham, who taught psychology. Dr. Eisenberg was the president of the school. While I was there he taught too. The regular teacher left for some reason and Dr. Eisenberg filled in for him. The course was called The History of Education. He was a marvelous teacher.

We lived on the Mercer-Butler Pike near London. One time when I came home from college in December of 1922 my eleven-year-old brother died of diptheria. They had just come out with an anti-toxin for it, but our doctor didn't know anything about it. It all happened so quickly. He had a sore throat and we all thought it was just that, a sore throat. It got so much worse that my parents called the doctor. We didn't have a telephone but a neighbor did. But our doctor didn't understand diptheria because it was so rare around here. When my brother had almost choked to death the doctor realized that it was diptheria and told my brother-in-law to go and get the anti-toxin. He returned about 1 A.M. and the doctor administered it to my brother. By that time my brother was fighting for his breath. That afternoon our old doctor visited my brother and said that he thought my brother would recover but he died a few hours later.

The Cunningham's took the body away to embalm it and then brought it back for display in our living room. The Cunningham's have been undertakers for generations. I don't think there was such a thing as a funeral home in those days. When they did come in I know people were very hesitant to take their loved ones there because they wanted them at home as long as they could. In fact I think the tradition was that the body was never left alone while it was on display at home. Someone stayed with it all night by taking turns sitting with it. My father did not dig the grave. Certain members of the church always did that work.

ADA REYNOLDS - 1915

I was born in 1915 in Reynoldsville; my great-granddad was one of the first settlers there. Reynoldsville is a few miles from Brookville. When I was three we moved to a farm near Jackson Center. We came out on the train and they put the cow on the same train as the furniture and us to be sure that she got there safely; we didn't want her car to be shunted onto a siding for weeks or she would die.

We went to Pardoe by rail and were met there by a new neighbor, Orvill Griffin, who brought us to the farm by his surrey. We didn't have much furniture at first so we borrowed some blankets from a neighbor and put straw on the floor and slept that way. We came to Mercer County because my father knew George Howe, who later opened the coffee company in Grove City, and the Rogers family in Slippery Rock, and they got Dad a place out here.

My father owned two teams so during the week he would go to Ohio with one team to hire out while my brother and I worked the farm with the other team. Brother wasn't big enough to hold the plow handles and the reins at the same time so I drove the plow team while he plowed. Dad needed two jobs to make a go of it. We kids knew what we had to do and we did it. Mother grew white beans and during the day she would pick bushels of them. Then in the evening we would sit around and shell them and tell ghost stories until we were ready to go to bed. We really enjoyed that.

We shopped in Grove City on Fridays. I don't know why we chose Fridays that was just our day to shop. Of course we didn't buy much because we tried to raise all we needed. We bought sugar, coffee and spices. We never attended the movies in town; I did not go to a movie until I was grown up. We provided our own entertainment on the farm. With nine kids and the neighbors you can have a lot of fun. Our Sunday school had at least one party a month and they usually came to our house because it was so big. We would play games like charades and "gossip". "Gossip" was one person whispering a story to the person sitting next to him and by the time the story got around the round it was a laugh to hear how it had changed by the telling. We didn't dance. We didn't think it sinful, it's just that nobody in our group danced. Boys met girls through these parties and at church. But basically we were such close neighbors that we all knew each other very well already. All of us in the country were very close. When there was a funeral everybody went.

I remember a funeral when I was very young. The casket was wooden and was lined with cloth; it was wide at the shoulders and narrow at the feet. The daughter of the dead woman grabbed up her mother into her arms in a show of grief, but that night she went to a dance so I guess her grief was short-lived. Funerals began to be held in funeral homes in the 1920's because it was much more convenient. There were no memories stirred up by holding the funeral in the front parlor.

Dad got a car in 1923, a Ford "tin lizzie". It was a reliable car and it enabled us to visit our relatives around Reynoldsville which we had not done before. The roads weren't too bad in the summertime. Of course it took a lot longer to get there then.

We raised wheat and corn on the farm and we would get it ground at the mill in Grove City up on North street at the dam just before you got to Hallville. Before we took the grain to be ground we would put it into the oven to brown it or parch it to give it a better flavor after it was ground.

The first time I baked I made 18 loaves of bread. They didn't go stale because there were 16 people eating at our house; by then some of us nine kids were married and they were still living at home, and farmers who would come to haul away lumber that Dad had sold them sometimes stayed for a meal with us.

Dad cut the trees down on our place and a man who owned a saw mill located his mill on our place. All the farmers would bring their logs here to be sawn. We got the sawdust; it was wonderful for use in bedding and on the garden.

We burned coal that we dug ourselves at the mine to save money. It was cheaper that way and with the shallow mines it was not too difficult to dig. It was like the "pick your own" farm markets of today.

I went to work when I was 14 on a farm for 50 cents a day. Later, during the Depression I did housework. In 1940 I went to work at the Odd Fellows Home for \$28 a month and room and board.

It was very dead around here during the Depression because nobody had any money. But for farmers it wasn't very different since we grew most of what we needed on the farm. I don't know anything about Roosevelt's New Deal; we didn't hear much out in the country and we didn't get a radio until about 1940. We got electricity in 1941 so our first radio was a battery radio. Other people got electricity before us but our gas lights were fine. It was a bright light and you could read by it; something like the Coleman lanterns of today. They scared me some though, the open flame and all. Other people must have had radio and electricity before us but we never missed it; we played dominoes and other games and were content. We liked to go sled riding, using a shovel and cardboard to slide down hills.

I worked in the dining room at the Odd Fellows Home. We had to be there at 5:30 in the morning and many times we didn't get through until 9 at night. We "mangled" two days a week and we had the sewing room to work in. And we cleaned the parlor, the library and washed dishes for 160 people. We got one day a week. It was not a good job but it was a job.

I got a good job during World War II working at the Bessemer. I got 86¢ an hour plus hospitalization. I ran a turret lathe for a year and then worked in the shipping department. I worked there until 1946 when all the girls were laid off because the service men were returning to their jobs. There was no resentment among most women about giving up their jobs to returning service men; we were happy to do it.

DOROTHY RUSSELL - 1906

I was born in Greenville in 1906. My father was a machinist for the Bessemer Railroad. He loved working for the railroad and that was about the only good job he ever had. He was very proud to work for the railroad because they were good to their employees; they had benefits, the work was steady, and we got free passes on the railroad. Mother and I used to go up to Erie once or twice a month. We liked to go to the Boston store and there was a great big market there where we would get fruit and whitefish, which my parents especially liked. Or we would go to Conneaut Lake to the amusement park. It was almost like it is today; there weren't as many rides and the roller coaster was not as high as today, but otherwise it was the same. They had a merry-go-round, the roller coaster, and swings which would swing wide while they were spun around. They didn't have rides like the whip rides of today. But anyway, we went primarily to picnic. That was the big thing. We'd take baskets of food.

We also looked forward to the Mercer and Stoneboro fairs. The big attraction at the fairs for me was seeing the livestock, but especially the arts and crafts. A lot of people crocheted then and did embroidery work and it was beautiful. The canned goods were really something to look at. The jars seemed to be larger and the food was not broken into pieces; they would can whole peaches which looked prettier. They canned everything in those days too; sausage was canned and it was good with buckwheat cakes in the winter time. The buckwheat cakes were made with "starter"; the starter was yeast and you would add buckwheat cake ingredients to it all winter, allowing it to sit a few days to get it ready. Each time you would take out batter you would add more ingredients to be ready the next time you wanted it. People canned because frozen foods were unknown then. All we had were ice boxes. I can remember the ice man carrying in a big slab of ice with his big ice tongs.

The washing machines were still new then. Our first one had to be cranked by hand. Mother and I would take turns doing the cranking and if my father was home he would lend a hand. We made our own wash soap too. We bought store soap for bathing, but used a harsher soap for clothes. It was hard on the hands but the clothes came out really white.

The most exciting electric appliance we got was a refrigerator to replace the ice box. When the refrigerator came just after World War I, we thought it was the most wonderful thing ever invented and Dad went right out and bought one. It had a big, round evaporator on the top. Now we could keep the butter upstairs instead of down in the root cellar; it was convenient. Our first electric appliance was a victrola (phonograph) during World War I. We bought all the latest songs like "Tipperary", and gospel songs too.

My only memory of World War I was when the troop trains came through Greenville. They would come on the Erie Railroad way up at the other end of town. Then they would march them through town. The town would come out and cheer the men as they passed. They didn't have USOs then, but the Salvation Army would have donuts for troops passing through. If the soldiers were to stay longer soup would be provided by local ladies.

It was expected that most kids would go to high school. I took the business course. I wanted to be a secretary. During the summers I worked in the 5 and 10 and when I graduated I did office work there. Later I came to Grove City in 1941 to work at Cooper-Bessemer in the purchasing department. I was not a buyer, the fellows did that. I worked in the files and kept track of the invoices of parts coming in and going out. When the servicemen came home my job at the Bessemer ended.

My favorite job was at the old Bashline Hospital located at Center and Pine. I worked there for 18 years keeping the medical insurance records. Then Dr. Hoyt, Dr. Hart, Dr. Long and Dr. Fithian, and Dr. Humphrey had the clinic and they didn't have an insurance girl and they were thinking of building a hospital. Insurance was getting to be a big thing in the 1960's and they wanted an insurance girl so I worked there for several years.

When I came to Grove City to work at the Bessemer during World War II I took an apartment with a girlfriend over the Isaly's store on Broad street next to the Guthrie theater. It was not a noisy place to live then because with gas rationing there were few cars on the streets.

With all the servicemen at Grove City College there was a USO here and I used to go over there and play the piano for them. The USO was located in the old armory building where the youth center is now.

Father was a German and he liked his beer and Mother had a fit about it. We never had a deck of cards in the house and I didn't learn to play cards until I came down here to Grove City. Grove City was dry but the father of the man who runs Rudy's had a place out at Hallville that wasn't as large as Rudy's today, and sometimes the girls would go out there for his spaghetti and you could get drinks there. But there was very little drinking in Grove City that I was aware of.

There have been big fires that I remember. One was the A & P store fire; it was so hot they had to spray water on the old Bashline Hospital to keep it from burning too. It was a very hot fire.

VERA ROGERS - 1912

I was born in East Butler in 1912 and we moved to Grove City when I was five years old. My father was "Dad" Mason over at the Cooper-Bessemer. He melted all the iron there. He was the only "cupelo man". That means he relined the great smoke stack. He was brought up here from East Butler especially for that job. Melting iron was the most important job at the plant.

This is a clique-type town; you have to be accepted by your group. The upper groups are busy people; they like to golf, or dance, or have parties. Churches in town lead the way and business people have to be a part of the churches to belong and be seen and help them to be recognized if they want to be a part of things here.



THE U.S.O. WAS LOCATED HERE DURING WORLD WAR II:
 PHOTO: MERCER COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



BROAD STREET, looking South, Grove City, Pa.
 FROM THE RAILROAD TRACKS ABOUT 1920:
 PHOTO: MERCER COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



THE OPERA HOUSE BLOCK. LOCATED ON THE SOUTH EAST SIDE OF THE DIAMOND WHICH BURNED IN 1920. NOTE AT RIGHT THE MAGOFFIN HOUSE WHICH NOW HOUSES THE MERCER COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND MUSEUM! PHOTO: MERCER COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



THE NORTH DIAMOND LOOKING EAST ABOUT 1925. THE NORTH WEST BANK IS ON THE CORNER. THE SIGN IN THE CENTER INDICATING A GARAGE TO THE LEFT INDICATES THE VINCENT GARAGE BEHIND THE DIAMOND! PHOTO: MERCER COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

You can become a part of the town if you want to by becoming active. I catered weddings here in Grove City. Tradition is gone from weddings. People make their own vows today and they're beautiful, but something is missing. But we have to adjust to changing times. In the 1930's you had to have money to have a big wedding or funeral. Weddings were small for most people then.

Raising kids was much easier then, and cheaper. Kids were tougher and didn't demand so much to be happy. Kids don't realize that it is better to have to struggle and have discipline. You would walk miles and think nothing of it. Kid's clothes are more comfortable today but they are so sloppy. On the other hand, in the old days kids classed each other socially by the clothes they wore, and some could not afford good clothes.

In 1950 I helped take the census. I never knew how many dilapidated houses there were in Grove City, like on Broad street and Brooklyn hill. These are all old buildings. There used to be many houses on Broad street that were very old then. They are gone now.

NICK SICILIAN - 1921

I was born in Number 2 Mine in 1921 and so I was nine years old in 1930 when Marco Demifonte committed his mass murder. Everybody was a coalminer in Number 2 Mine. Everybody was related and knew each other. Marco was a very nice gentleman. He used to shoot blackbirds and we as children used to go and pick them up for him. He was a barber as well as a coal miner and he used to cut our hair for us. The mine itself was half a mile below the town and the company store was the brick building on the corner that still stands abandoned on the road to Brent. There were bars on the windows to protect the merchandise. You could buy anything in there from clothing to spark plugs for an auto engine. The prices were okay and you could get credit and they'd take it out of your coal mine wages.

The one room school was up on the hill. Later when the schools were all consolidated our school building was abandoned and sold to the Stodalak's. It was dragged down the hill and used as a car repair garage. It still stands on the lower end of the town street. About 38 to 40 kids attended this school.

Mr. Demifonte was a sociable man, a nice man. There was no hint of his being mentally unbalanced. He used to come over to our house to play cards. I have heard that his doctor warned the police that he was potentially dangerous, but I don't know for sure. I heard afterwards that they had wanted to lock him up earlier but his wife wouldn't let them.

Mr. Demifonte lived at the west or lower end of the street. On the fateful morning he was supposed to go to work and was having coffee waiting for the mine whistle to call him to work. His sister-in-law who lived at the east end of the street had come over and was having coffee with his wife.

He went upstairs and got his shotgun and came down and shot both women. Thirteen children were made orphans in an instant. Then he started walking east up the street. The next door neighbor, Mrs. Iacella was out hanging clothes. He shot her in the head and killed her. The undertaker told me later that all three women had been shot in the head. I was playing with my wagon in front of my house half way up the road. I had not heard the earlier gunshots. When I saw his shotgun I thought he was going blackbird hunting, so I called to him, "Going hunting, Marco?" But when he pointed the shotgun at me I turned and ran. He shot me twice in the back and knocked me over. The doctor later worked for four hours to get the pellets out of me. I still have pellets in my lungs and shoulder. When he first raised his gun I was about 15 feet away from him, but by the time he fired at me running away from him I was far enough away that the pellets were dispersed. Each time he hit me it knocked me down, but I was able to get up both times and run for the house. The expression on his face was blank but I knew he meant to kill me, and I ran the instant he raised his gun.

My mother had heard the shots and came running out of the house. After being shot the second time I was lying on the ground. My mother came and picked me up and carried me into the house and locked the doors. In his demented state he apparently had to kill anyone who crossed his path, because he smashed a window and came into the house after me. My mother tried to protect me. She went and got a pistol called a "lemon squeezer" because there was a safety on the back of the handle which, if you did not squeeze it in your grip, would not fire. She tried to shoot him but the gun wouldn't fire because she didn't know about the safety. Marco then shot her in the side with his shotgun and mortally wounded her. I was lying on the floor and watched everything. She fell on the floor and he began to hit her with the gun. He didn't say anything, he just made grunting noises as he hit her. I can remember it as plain as though it were today. I was under the bed by this time and as he was hitting my mother I wanted to get upstairs to my sister so I tried to run up the stairs. I was terrorized and couldn't help yelling as I ran, "He killed my Mom; he killed my Mom!" He heard me and shot me again, this time in the leg. I lost consciousness and I suppose that he thought I was dead; I must have been covered with blood.

Marco then went outside. My house was near that of a hunting friend of his and he shouted, "Hey Smokey Joe! We gonna hunt?" Smokey Joe had a gun and could have prevented Marco from entering our house, but he was scared to shoot his friend. He didn't have the guts to shoot him.

Then Marco started down the street again and the shoemaker came along. He was a good friend of Marco's. The shoemaker said, "Marco, what are you doing?" And Marco turned and blew part of his head off. Smokey Joe still had his 30-30 rifle leveled on Marco but he wouldn't shoot him.

By now someone had run up to the company store to call the police and so George Masters, the 40-year-old store manager, heard about what was happening. He grabbed a shotgun and ran the hundred yards to the residential street of Number 2 Mine. Just as Marco shot the shoemaker George Masters came down over the hill.

George Masters told Marco to stop where he was. Marco whipped up his shotgun and pulled the trigger, but the gun was empty! Marco began to reload. George Masters raised his shotgun and fired. Had he missed, Marco would have been reloaded. But he didn't miss and Marco fell, hit in the legs, into a puddle of water. A bunch of guys rushed out and held him down. Then they threw him into the back of a truck and the police took him to the county jail.

The police thought I was dead so they asked Mr. Cunningham, the funeral director from Leesburg, to take me too, along with the other dead bodies. But Dr. David Vogan said not to, that I wasn't dead. He worked on me for about four hours at his hospital.

I was in the hospital for 43 days. My father visited Marco in jail and asked him why he had killed my mother. He said that he had only wanted to kill his wife and sister-in-law because they were plotting against him, and after that he was crazy.

When I returned home it was difficult. I was always looking behind me and I had recurrent nightmares of Marco coming after me. The families all rallied around to raise the children. None of us was ever sent to an orphanage.

ISABELL WALLACE - 1912

I was born in Grove City in 1912. The biggest thing that has happened around here since I've been here was the paving of the dirt roads. Pinch road where I was raised was paved in the 1930's. When I walked to high school along Pinch road it was usually deep mud. I would first come through the Odd Fellows Woods where the water tanks are now and then along the road. I had to wear boots because of the mud. I used to leave my boots under a bush on Main street. The boots were never stolen. I didn't want to walk into school with those big very muddy boots on. A man who lived on Main street, Mr. Barger, saw me do this every day. One day as I walked home from school Mr. Barger told me, "Honey, I've made a little present for you." He had made a little wooden box to put my boots in to keep them dry. Mr. Karpas who has the news stand and shoe shine parlor on the other side of the railroad tracks now, used to have the newstand on Broad street. I always used to need to have my shoes and boots cleaned. If I happened to pass by he would say to me, "You come in here, you need a shoe shine." He's been a friend these many years.

We lived in "Pinch along." It was called that because old Jimmie Spears, who owned a coal mine there, used to say to his men when they wanted equipment, "Well, we'll just have to pinch along." There were many small coal mines up there in Pinch Along. One was only about 100 yards from our house. Only coal miners lived in Pinch; there were only 14 or 15 houses out there.

I met my husband by watching a train go by. When the National Guard left for camp by train a girlfriend and I sat on the embankment and watched the train go by. One of the guardsman named Ward had taken me to the movies and as the train passed my future husband said to him, "Who's that one with the long curls?" When Ward told him he said, "I want to meet her when we get back," Ward brought him out to see me and we began to go together. We broke up a few times but were finally married and were together for 52 years.

Boys sometimes met girls at the movies like I met Ward. Mother would give us kids a dime each to go to the movies while she shopped. Many families did this. We went every Saturday night while Mother shopped. Afterwards we would meet her at the corner of Pine and Broad streets.

Bobbit's grocery store was the most popular grocery store then; he was on Broad street. I was hired there in about 1934, just before Social Security came in in 1935. The hardest job for a clerk was cutting a slab of cheese close to the size the customer wanted. The cheese came shaped in big round wheels. The fuzz was cleaned off it in the basement. Cheese is difficult to cut because all cheeses weigh differently because all cheese has different consistency. I made a big mistake with the first customer who wanted cheese. When I weighed the slab I had cut, it was way off the amount she wanted, way off! The woman wasn't happy with it and I was about to cry when Mr. Bobbit came over. He told me not to cry and he told the woman that he would cut her another piece of cheese, but if it wasn't to her liking she would have to shop elsewhere.

Everything in the store had to be cut and weighed right there; nothing came prepackaged in those days. We ground coffee right there in the store. Grocery stores had very definite smells in those days, and very nice smells they were. We sold penny candy too and the kids would come in for it. But stores always included penny candy when someone bought their weekly order. We looked forward to that candy all week.

The local grocery stores often bought local produce to sell. My parents grew rhubarb, real red rhubarb, not the green stuff you get today. And Tom Allen, another grocer, would call and ask if we had any rhubarb for sale. People didn't live "out of the store" like they do now; they canned more then.

The first chain store to come to Grove City was the A & P, if I remember correctly. It was located between Center and Pine streets opposite the Bashline hospital. I remember when it burned down; it was a spectacular fire.

Another big fire was in the Bashline hospital during World War II. My brother was a policeman here then. I remember that he came running over to me and asked me to help move the patients out of the hospital. I had my first baby in my arms, but a couple of men came out of the A & P and volunteered to watch the baby. My brother and I moved the beds out into the halls. Others pitched in to help.

There wasn't much crime in Grove City. I can remember when there was only one policeman, Charlie Rae, who was crippled in one hand and arm. They weren't as chosy as they are now. He walked around town; there was no police car. And he did things we wouldn't expect today. When my kid brother got old enough to go to ball games and things Mr. Rae would call and ask Momma if my brother could come into town for a game. Then Momma would walk him down the railroad tracks to the edge of town and Mr. Rae would meet him and take him to a game.

One time about 1920 there was an ice cream truck that used to come along Pinch road. My new brother-in-law gave me 50¢ to get some ice cream cones. They were a nickle each. I was so dumb that I got 50¢ worth of cones; ten of them! It was a big event when the ice cream truck came around.

Every July Fourth there was big doings at Grove City College. There was all kinds of entertainment: speeches, the Highland dancers would dance, and I can also remember a favorite picnic area. Just a few steps from my home there was some steps over the railroad embankment and then there was a path up through the Odd Fellows Woods and they used to hold picnics there.

The first picnic was on Decoration Day (Memorial Day) and I remember we always used to bake a chocolate cake with little candies on it. That picnic was a big deal to us. People would come in on the train from all over, even Pittsburgh, to attend that picnic.

My father dug graves for the Odd Fellows; \$15 to open and close a grave. He would dig them after he came home from work to earn extra money. When it was cold I can remember my mother and I carrying hot coffee up to my dad while we worked. Today it costs over \$200 to have a grave dug.

At one time I knew almost everyone in Grove City because it was much smaller then and working in the grocery store I got to know most people. Even the college was much smaller then. There were no college buildings on the east side of Wolf Creek then. There was the girls' dormitory, the building on the corner of Broad street which is still there and two buildings where Tower Church now stands. One was the music building and I remember taking piano lessons in that building. Where Penney's is now there was a big brick house known as Margaglio's.

I got \$10 a week in wages for a $5\frac{1}{2}$ day week (we closed at noon on Wednesday). Sometimes we would stay open until 10 P.M. if we were very busy, but I still got only \$10 for that week, no overtime. But money didn't seem so important then in how we lived; if you had food and clothes you were content. We didn't have a radio until the mid-1930's and then it was home-built; my brother-in-law built one with ear phones.

The preachers and school teachers used to walk out to Pinch Along; there was a Pinch Along school, all eight grades. When the weather was bad the teachers would stay overnight with local families. We didn't feel that this was an imposition at all; we enjoyed having them.

Kids had an easier time staying out of trouble then. There was nowhere to go except the movies so who needed a car? Doing the chores gave us something to do. In the fall we picked chestnuts. Kids are not different today; they just have more money and more things they can do, and sometimes this gets them into trouble.

Only coal miners lived in Pinch; there were only 14 or 15 houses out there. People worked harder then. Dad had to walk out the Sandy Lake road to get to work. We didn't own a horse or a car. I didn't learn to drive a car until I married.

CHESTER YARD - 1908

My great-grandfather was from England. He fought in the American Revolution and received 640 acres of land at Barkeyville in payment for his services. My grandfather was born on the family homestead, but I was born in Grove City in 1908.

Grandfather built oil rigs; he had a group of men working for him. The towers were 60 feet high and dangerous to be on. You could be blown off by winds. It was even more dangerous to dismantle a rig for moving elsewhere.

Grandfather also did fancy wood graining. He could grain a wood knot on a door that looked just like a real one. The paint looked like wood. He picked up this skill by himself when he figured he was too old to stay with building oil rigs.

Grandfather fought in the Civil War and was in the cavalry. He was wounded three times: once in the shoulder, (you could look right through the wound he said), once in the side, and once in the leg. He was in a hospital when they told him that they were going to cut his leg off. He told them that they weren't going to cut the leg off. And they said they were. That day his buddy came in to see him. Grandfather asked him if he had brought his gun with him. He said that he had and Grandfather said, "Give it to me." The doctor came in the next morning to take him in to have his leg off and Grandfather pulled out the pistol. He said, "You're not going to cut my leg off. You're going to doctor me and I'm going home with my leg." And he came home with his leg. I believe he got that leg wound around Gettysburg somewhere.

My father was a painter. He picked it up from grandfather by working with him. That's how I learned to paint; my brothers and I worked with my father. Now my grandson is a painter too! We've been in it over a hundred years. We used a Model T Ford car for our work. We would have the ladders stacked up on the roof four feet high when we went to a job, five or six sets of ladders. We painted and decorated around Barkeyville, Grove City, Clintonville, and all around here. We didn't have to advertise. Anymore we can't do all the work we have because you can't get painters any more. It's harder to find men who will be painters than it was years ago because it is hard work. People don't want to do hard physical work anymore.

We didn't do as many jobs then as we do now because people didn't have the money to have their houses painted in those days. If you got a half a dozen houses during the summer you were pretty lucky. If you made a \$1000 a year, you were a pretty busy painter. So you had to save your money to get you through the winter. If Grandfather got a painting job he could do in the winter, as an inside job, I would take him to the job in the wagon and he would stay there overnight until the job was finished, right there on the job. Clintonville was an oil town and there were wealthy people there; that's where he did most of his winter work. One time in 1926 I took him there in a horse and buggy and I took a basket of eggs with me to sell. I got a dollar a dozen for them.

We didn't believe in using paint rollers when they came out even though they are faster than brushed. They are the lazy man's way of painting. We did spray paint, though, when I worked at the Bessemer. The biggest change I see in painting is the paint itself. Paint is now so much different today. In those days it was only lead and oil. When we were going to paint a house we would get a big tub, take 100 pounds of lead paste and put it in the tub. Gradually we added in linseed oil to make it liquid; about five gallons. Finally we would add about a gallon of turpentine to thin it out to the thickness we wanted. We would have to stir it every day for a week before we could put it on the house. It was a lot of work. This made white paint because the lead was no such thing as ready-mixed paint in those days. That made it harder for someone to paint his own house and many fewer people did it in those days. You could buy the ingredients at a hardware store if you wanted to mix your own, but you could mix it too thin or too thick and have a mess.

It took a week of stirring so that all the oil could soak into the lead. If you didn't the paint would be streaky. Ready-mixed paint came out during the 1930's. It was a big help; I think Sherwin Williams came out with it first. At first people were suspicious of "artificial" paint; they wanted their house painted with lead and oil. They were used to lead and oil and it took 20 years for them to get used to ready mixed paint, until after World War II.

We moved from Grove City to Barkeyville in 1912 when my grandfather gave my father a piece of his land to build on. We would come into Grove City from Barkeyville about once a year in the horse and buggy. When we got a little money together we would come in to shop for things we couldn't get at the country stores in Barkeyville.

Barkeyville's mistake is the reason Slippery Rock had the college there now. Barkeyville had an academy they wanted to enlarge into a state normal school. But the local farmers didn't like the idea of a large school drawing in young kids; it would ruin the town. So they refused to sell land to the academy to expand and Slippery Rock took a chance. Barkeyville would have been a big town now. They had it all laid out, streets and alleys. There's still the remains of the foundation of the academy up there.

Barkeyville had five stores: two hardware stores and three grocery stores. And they were all busy. They sold buggies and sleds. Hardware stores sold farm machinery like plows and harrows. The grocery stores clothing and shoes. I don't recall getting a bad fit in those stores with those shoes ~~either~~. They kept a big selection of sizes.

We didn't need much food from the grocery store. We had two two acres of land which we gardened and from which we then canned about a thousand jars of food in the fall. We also had pigs, chickens, a cow, and a horse. We smoked the ham and it was delicious. We had a little building, four or five square, and we would have a little smoke fire at the bottom. We would smoke 15 or 20 hams at one time because Granddad would smoke his hams with ours. We used some hickory chips but mostly apple for the smoking. What you wanted was strong smoke for smoking; sassafras was also good for smoking.

I got married in 1931. We went to Mercer to get married in a Model T Ford. Then we went to a grocery store in Grove City and bought groceries. They told me it was the largest order of groceries they had ever sold in the store down there: \$14 worth! Ha, Ha!

It was dangerous in those days to look for a girl where you weren't known. I used to go to dances in Annandale (Boyers today). You had to be careful or when you came out of the dance your horse's throat might be cut or the harness cut. There were lots of foreigners there working in the mines; but it wasn't them that did it. It was Americans. They were jealous if an outsider took one of their girls.

In 1928 I became the driver for a bootlegger in Farrell. It was easy money and an easy job. Just about every other house in Farrell was a bootlegger in those days. This bootlegger didn't have to learn how to drive so he hired me. He bought a brand new car for me to drive. I had nothing to do with his bootlegging business, I would just drive him on errands to Sharon or Mercer.

He was the nicest fellow you ever met if he liked you. But if he didn't he'd maybe burn your barn down. He had no connection to organized crime that I knew of.

I was on the football field at Grove City when I was four years old to see one of the early airplanes land as part of a local doings. The pilot was to fly from Clarion but the winds were bad. The pilot's father was so worried that he offered his son \$100 not to fly that day. The plane looked like a kite and could easily be blown about by the winds, so high winds were very dangerous. But the pilot decided to fly anyway. He arrived at Grove City and we all saw him fly over, but at the upper end of the field the wind blew him into a tree and he was killed. I was only four but I still remember the crash. I can't remember seeing another airplane until the 1930's. They didn't build an airfield at Grove City until World War II, between Grove City and Slippery Rock.

The following is a list of typographical errors made while typing the interview with Don Kelly, Slippery Rock.

Gus Tellish	CORRECTION	Gus Kelly
Leonard Keister	CORRECTION	Henry Kiester
Kurt Thompson	CORRECTION	N. Kerr Thompson
John Dier	CORRECTION	John Bier
George Dixon	CORRECTION	George Dickson

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